

Bellarmino University

ScholarWorks@Bellarmino

---

Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Capstones

Graduate Research

---

9-19-2018

## No One is an Island: Student Experiences of a Catholic High School Curriculum Response to Bullying, Based on Themes from the Writings of Thomas Merton

Thomas E. Malewitz

Bellarmino University, [tmalewitz@icloud.com](mailto:tmalewitz@icloud.com)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.bellarmino.edu/tdc>



Part of the [Religious Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Malewitz, Thomas E., "No One is an Island: Student Experiences of a Catholic High School Curriculum Response to Bullying, Based on Themes from the Writings of Thomas Merton" (2018). *Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Capstones*. 61.

<https://scholarworks.bellarmino.edu/tdc/61>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at ScholarWorks@Bellarmino. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Capstones by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@Bellarmino. For more information, please contact [jstemmer@bellarmine.edu](mailto:jstemmer@bellarmine.edu), [kpeers@bellarmine.edu](mailto:kpeers@bellarmine.edu).

*No One is an Island*: Student experiences of a Catholic high school curriculum response to  
bullying, based on themes from the writings of Thomas Merton

by

Thomas E. Malewitz

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty

Of the College of Education

In fulfillment

Of the requirements for

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In Education and Social Change

Bellarmino University

Louisville, KY

September 19, 2018

Copyright ©2018, Thomas Edward Malewitz

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nothing at all makes sense, unless we admit... that: ‘No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of a continent, a part of the main’ (Merton, 1983, pp. xxii-xxiii).

I am deeply grateful to have met and grown with so many people willing to offer their time, knowledge, guidance, and passions to assist me throughout this study. I would like to offer my gratitude to the following people, who have been an instrumental part of this study and my life throughout the process of this research.

I am grateful for the love, patience, prayers and unwavering encouragement of my family throughout the course of this study especially of my wife, Bridget, and step-daughters Meredith, Brenna, and Hope; my parents, Charles and Imogene Malewitz; Richard† and Marian Williams; my grandmother, Frances Rybo, and Carolyn Rybo.

I would like to express my gratitude to my committee, Dr. Daniel Castner, Dr. Elizabeth Dinkins, Dr. Gregory Hillis, and Dr. Paul Pearson. I deeply appreciate the dedication of your time and copious feedback throughout this project, as well as your wisdom and patience. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. David Paige and Dr. Grant Smith for their support and guidance throughout the many iterations of this study.

I also would like to acknowledge that this study would not have come to fruition without the support and encouragement of Dr. Paul Pearson and Mark Meade of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University. I am especially indebted for their patience with my requests for resources as well as their timely communications throughout the research for this study.

I would like to thank Ann McCormick and the Merton Legacy Trust for the approval to include unpublished material of Thomas Merton’s correspondence within this study; as well as Morgan Atkinson for the generosity of his research. I would also like to express my gratitude to Richard Sisto for his time and sharing his recollections of Thomas Merton.

I am deeply grateful for the continual encouragement and support of my colleagues: David Ianke, Dr. Beatriz Pacheco, Robert Scheler, Karen White, Chris Willman, and Adam Zoeller. I especially extend my gratitude to Dr. Perry Sangalli and Frank Espinosa for their understanding, encouragement, and flexibility as I struggled to balance time between work and doctoral studies.

I am deeply grateful for the support of the many friends and educators that offered support and encouragement: Rev. Tony Bickett, Dr. Ellen Dugan-Barrette, Rev. Brian Johnson, Kyle T. Kramer, Rev. Dan Kreutzer, Dr. Ryan LaMothe, Rev. Louis Madey, Rev. Bernard “Bernie” O’Connor†, Dr. Morris Pelzel, and especially Jeff Jenkins for his editing guidance and feedback.

I would also like to thank my Bellarmine Cohort: Jennifer Englert-Copeland, Dr. Becky Goetzinger, Carol Nord, Kathleen Sanchez, and Dr. Stephanie White. It has been a pleasure to journey this path with you. I wish you all the best for the future.

## DEDICATION

To Richard Williams†

aviator, engineer, inspiration, philosopher, philanthropist, uncle, veteran, and constant seeker...

“...Up, up the long delirious burning blue  
I’ve topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,  
where never lark, or even eagle, flew;  
and, while with silent, lifting mind I’ve trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
put out my hand and touched the face of God.”  
(J. G. Magee, Jr., *High Flight*, 1941)

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation was an explorative study of student experiences of a first-iteration Catholic curriculum created to respond to the epidemic of adolescent bullying, from an expansive and holistic perspective (Huggins, 2016). The curriculum used in this study was inspired by themes from the writings of Thomas Merton (1915-1968) a Catholic monk, Civil Rights activist, inter-religious bridge, and non-violent resistor (Merton, 1975; Merton, 1983; Merton, 1989). This qualitative study utilized the methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017) using the Christian Humanistic ethic as a lens to examine and explain the emergent theological themes of the students' engagement and shared interpretations of the first iteration 10-day curriculum. The curriculum utilized activities surrounding the themes of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony as the path to happiness, as stated in *No Man Is an Island* (Merton, 1983). Through the use of reflective dialogues, meditation, and kinesthetic learning opportunities such as a drum circle and a collaborative game, the students explored the importance of self-discovery, unity, group dynamics, and healthy communication skills as a positive response to bullying, stigmatization, and peer isolation. Through the activities and open-ended reflections four overarching themes emerged from the students' shared experiences of the curriculum: a) all humanity has worth and value; b) it is essential to develop common ground with others; c) peace and calm are better avenues to resolve conflict than aggression and anger; and d) happiness is found beyond mere material possessions.

Keywords: bullying, adolescent spirituality, Catholic education, curriculum, Thomas Merton

Bellarmino University

The Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education of Bellarmine University certifies that Thomas E. Malewitz has successfully defended his dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education and Social Change as of September 19, 2018.

*No One is an Island*: Student experiences of a Catholic high school curriculum response to bullying, based on themes from the writings of Thomas Merton

Thomas E. Malewitz

**Dissertation Committee:**

Committee Chair: Elizabeth G. Dinkins, Ph.D.

Interim Dean of the School of Education & Associate Professor of Literacy Education  
Bellarmino University

Committee Member: Daniel J. Castner, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction  
Indiana University Bloomington

Committee Member: Gregory K. Hillis, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Theology  
Bellarmino University

Committee Member: Paul M. Pearson, Ph.D.

Director and Archivist, The Thomas Merton Center  
Bellarmino University

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	2
DEDICATION.....	3
ABSTRACT.....	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	6
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.....	11
Background of the Study.....	14
Statement of the Problem.....	16
Purpose.....	17
Central Questions.....	18
Significance of the Study.....	19
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework.....	22
Summary of the Methodology.....	27
Assumptions and Limitations.....	30
Brief Biography of Individuals Significant for this Study.....	32
Definition of Key Terms.....	34
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	37
Bullying.....	39
Merton and bullying.....	40
Defining bullying.....	44
Statistics on bullying behavior.....	46
Contributing factors of bullying behavior.....	47
Peer pressure.....	47
Self-esteem insecurities.....	48
Abuse or humiliation.....	49
Root of the problem.....	51
Current policies to respond to bullying in school settings.....	52
Reform behaviors.....	52
Immediate and severe consequences.....	53
An alternative perspective.....	54
Figure 2.1. Contrast of reductionistic and expansive responses to bullying.....	58
Adolescent Spirituality.....	59
Thomas Merton: An exemplar.....	60
Self-discovery, and a search for acceptance.....	61
Passion, and a search for intimacy.....	63
Advocacy, and a search for social justice.....	66
The culture of adolescents.....	68
Negotiating authenticity.....	70
Defining passion.....	72

Recognizing advocacy.....	74
Figure 2.2. Comparison of adolescent spirituality and the life of Merton.....	76
Catholic Education.....	76
Merton and Catholic education.....	77
Defining Catholic education.....	80
Roots of Catholic education.....	81
Assessment of Catholic education.....	83
Adolescent education.....	84
Curriculum.....	86
Curriculum theory.....	87
4S Understanding curriculum framework and its roots.....	90
Summary.....	93
Figure 2.3. Overview of the literature review.....	95
CHAPTER III. THE CURRICULUM: NO ONE IS AN ISLAND.....	96
Why Thomas Merton? .....	97
Merton: Background and Biography.....	99
Youth, adolescence, and college years.....	100
Discernment and religious profession.....	102
Authorship and contemplative voice.....	103
Advocacy and ecumenical dialogue.....	104
On respecting the life and writings of Thomas Merton.....	106
First-Iteration Curriculum: Framing and Development.....	108
Figure 3.1. The 4S Understanding Framework.....	111
Order.....	112
The topic.....	114
The session implementation expectations.....	115
The activity used for session implementation: Collaborative Jenga.....	116
4S Understanding framework: order.....	117
Figure 3.2. Order: 4S Understanding.....	118
Balance.....	118
The topic.....	119
The session implementation expectations.....	120
The activity used for session implementation: Silent Meditation.....	121
4S Understanding framework: balance.....	121
Figure 3.3. Balance: 4S Understanding.....	122
Rhythm.....	122
The topic.....	123
The session implementation expectations.....	124
The activity used for session implementation: Drum circle.....	124
4S Understanding framework: rhythm.....	125
Figure 3.4. Rhythm: 4S Understanding.....	126
Harmony.....	126
The topic.....	127
The session implementation expectations.....	128
The activity used for session implementation: Film.....	128



4S Understanding framework: harmony.....	128
Figure 3.5. Harmony: 4S Understanding.....	129
Summary of the anticipated curriculum.....	129
Table 3.6. Overview of the anticipated curriculum implementation.....	130
Curriculum implementation.....	131
Adaptations to the first iterative curriculum.....	131
Implementation schedule.....	132
Table 3.7. Overview of the iterative curriculum implementation.....	133
Summary of the curriculum implementation.....	133
 CHAPTER IV. METHODOLOGY.....	 134
The Methodological Process.....	135
Description.....	136
Interpretation.....	137
Evaluation.....	138
Thematics.....	138
The Researcher’s Role as Connoisseur and Critic.....	139
Theo-educational Criticism and Connoisseurship.....	141
The researcher.....	141
As connoisseur of Catholic religious education.....	142
As critic of Catholic religious education.....	143
Researcher bias.....	144
Central questions.....	147
Figure 4.1. Curriculum arc.....	148
Participant Selection.....	149
Ethics.....	151
Data Collection.....	152
Artifacts.....	153
Table 4.2. Overview of collected artifacts.....	154
Audio/video recording and transcriptions.....	155
Table 4.3. Overview of activities and audio-video recordings.....	156
Observations and fieldnotes.....	157
Follow-up clarifications.....	158
Table 4.4. Overview of curriculum and primary data collection.....	159
Data Analysis.....	159
Table 4.5. Overview of term coding.....	161
Table 4.6. Overview of values coding.....	163
Table 4.7. Overview of dramaturgical coding.....	164
Credibility and Limitations.....	165
Summary.....	166
 CHAPTER V. FINDINGS.....	 168
Overview.....	169
Harmony.....	171
Description.....	171
Table 5.1. Summary of student engagement during session: Harmony.....	172

Student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences.....	175
Interpretation: Emergent themes.....	177
Balance.....	178
Description.....	178
Table 5.2. Summary of student engagement during session: Balance.....	179
Student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences.....	181
Interpretation: Emergent themes.....	183
Order.....	184
Description.....	184
Table 5.3. Summary of student engagement during session: Order.....	185
Student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences.....	189
Interpretation: Emergent themes.....	190
Rhythm.....	190
Description.....	191
Table 5.4. Summary of student engagement during session: Rhythm.....	191
Part I: The drum circle.....	192
Part II: The music videos.....	193
Student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences.....	195
Interpretation: Emergent themes.....	196
No one is an island: The curriculum as a whole.....	196
Interpretation: Emergent themes.....	199
All humanity has worth and value.....	199
It is essential to develop common ground with others.....	200
Peace and calm are better than aggression and anger.....	201
Happiness is greater than material possessions.....	201
Evaluation.....	202
Value of the data.....	203
Bullying.....	203
Adolescent spirituality.....	204
Catholic education.....	205
Curriculum.....	206
On the use of the writings of Thomas Merton with adolescents.....	208
Thematics.....	209
Transferability.....	209
Catholic curriculum responses to bullying.....	210
Secular curriculum responses to bullying.....	211
Summary.....	212
Figure 5.5. Overview of emerging session themes.....	213
Figure 5.6. Overview of comprehensive emerging themes.....	214
CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION.....	215
Findings.....	216
Harmony.....	217
Balance.....	217
Order.....	219
Rhythm.....	220

No one is an island: The curriculum as a whole.....	221
Limitations.....	223
Further inquiry.....	224
Conclusion.....	226
APPENDIX A. Curriculum artifacts: Order.....	228
1. PowerPoint slides 1 & 2.....	228
2. PowerPoint slides 3 & 4.....	229
3. PowerPoint slides 5 & 6.....	230
4. Worksheet handout page 1.....	231
5. Worksheet handout page 2.....	232
APPENDIX B. Curriculum artifacts: Balance.....	233
1. Worksheet handout page 1.....	233
2. Worksheet handout page 2.....	234
APPENDIX C. Curriculum artifacts: Rhythm.....	235
1. Worksheet handout page 1.....	235
2. Worksheet handout page 2.....	236
APPENDIX D. Curriculum artifacts: Harmony.....	237
1. Worksheet handout page 1.....	237
APPENDIX E. Additional documentation.....	238
1. Merton Legacy Trust approval to use unpublished letter of Thomas Merton.....	238
2. Student/parent consent form for participation in the study (redacted) .....	240
REFERENCES.....	242

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

[T]he Christian must see that his mission is not to contribute to the blind forces of annihilation which tend to destroy civilization and mankind together. He must seek to build rather than destroy. He must orient his efforts towards world unity and not towards world division. Anyone who promotes policies of hatred and of war is working for division and the destruction of civilized mankind (Merton, 1962/1980, p. 127)

Even half a century after his death, Thomas Merton remains an influential voice for social justice and non-violence, an advocate of the dignity of the human person and self-reflection, as well as a guide for spiritual seekers (Lenoir, 2017; Morris-Young, 2015; Williams, 2015). His critiques and challenges of reductionist and dehumanizing views found in religious and cultural stereotypes continue to offer a call to the respect of diverse cultural perspectives, a renewed view of the dignity of the human person, and aid in the foundation for ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue among diverse religious beliefs (Ali, 2017; Arnold, 1995; Casagram, 2014). Merton's personal experiences of the human condition, through successes, temptations, and failures resonate in a tangible way with many who struggle in the journey of living an authentic and whole life, especially in a culture of secular views and moral ambiguity (Grayston, 2015; Horan, 2014b; Palmer, 2014; Zuercher, 2014). The themes found in Merton's writings offer an expansive lens to view the connectivity that exists in the nature of a holistic recognition and expression of the human experience and continue to offer insight for many social challenges of the multi-cultural American melting pot (Francis, 2015; Sisto, 2014; Williams, 2015).

Contemporary adolescents face similar challenges that parallel the secular experiences and temptations of Merton's 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the search for self-awareness and authenticity,

peer identification or isolation, and social polarization (Gurian, 2017; Sax, 2007). In the midst of peer-group pressures, adolescents search and struggle to know their authentic-self, within and apart from group ideologies. Social groups and the pressures of group ideologies can affect individuals during adolescence more powerfully than other stages of life because of the maturation into adulthood and movement toward a new state of independent thought and decision making (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993). Although adolescent groupings may be positive, such as advocacy groups that lead adolescents to work together and offer compassionate service to their neighbor, some groupings may develop into negative cliques sharing a common identity at the expense and dignity of others, as seen in the growing epidemic of bullying in adolescent social groups and educational settings (Bond, 2014; Huggins, 2016; Leonard, 2014; Wiseman, 2009). To address the growing concern of youth bullying, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services established a national website to disclose facts and statistics, a help line, and online educational tutorials regarding the consequences of bullying behavior (e.g., [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)). At local levels, professional development sessions for educators and curriculums for students about the dangers and consequences of adolescent bullying have become an important part of behavior and class management policies (Leonard, 2014; Philippe, Hernandez-Melis, Fenning, Sears, & McDonough, 2017).

Current anti-bullying strategies, curriculums, and policies primarily focus on a reductionist perspective of bullying, focusing on clear identification and preventive measures that attempt to stop physical instances of bullying before it occurs (Garbarino & deLara, 2002; Oliver, 2015; Philippe et al., 2017). Anti-bullying programs that attempt to identify or just prevent bullying behaviors have recently come under criticism by some scholars for creating a

situation that addresses the symptoms of bullying but not affecting the root cause of bullying behavior (Boske, 2015b; Huggins, 2016). The reductionist perspective used in contemporary anti-bullying strategies and programs can also create a dehumanizing stigmatization on the victim and bully that negatively affects the self-perception of the victim or bully and may lead to further isolation in the perception of peers and adults (Huggins, 2016).

In contrast to their public counterparts, Catholic educators of adolescents have a unique opportunity, through a faith-based curriculum, to educate students from a physical and spiritual ethic, addressing the dignity of one's self, others, and relationships (McKinney, 2011; Topping, 2015a). This spiritual component of a Catholic curriculum offers the opportunity to create a dialogue surrounding the dignity of the whole human person while recognizing and respecting each human person in the community (Carrón, 2016; Del Prete, 1990; Giussani, 2001). To offer this type of cognitive and formative pedagogy, Catholic educators of adolescents need to bridge the gap between abstract theological concepts and real-life examples to show how an ethic of dignity could be lived out in a tangible way. The writings and spiritual insights of Thomas Merton offer a tangible, real-life experience that can relate to the struggles and circumstances of Catholics of all ages (e.g., Amodei, 2015; O'Hare, 2018; Pearson, 2014; Taylor, 2002; Thomas, 2018). Through his life of tenuous relationships, desire for social acceptance, advocacy and engaging a multicultural society, a bit of an anti-establishment persona and sentiment, Merton's struggles with authority, secular culture, and desire of passionate relationships mirror the life situations and themes that contemporary adolescents experience (Grayston, 2015; Loughrey, 2013; Pramuk, 2002; Zuercher, 2014;). Merton's letters and writings regarding the prejudicial beliefs and treatment of African-Americans during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's can

offer a strong insight and parallel for issues that affect contemporary stereotyping that often manifests itself in bullying and isolating behavior (Horan, 2014b; Merton, 1989).

### **Background of the study**

Since he was first published, Thomas Merton's writings have served as a moral compass and spiritual magnet for an audience yearning for answers of human existence and purpose (Merton, 1999; Moses, 2015). His voice unexpectedly touched a postwar generation searching for a deeper meaning of life (Horan, 2014b; Padovano, 1995). His words and writings have become respected as sage wisdom with a spiritual insight for ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. Merton's writings offer insight for self-reflection, contemplation, and ultimately the development of a deeper relationship with God while recognizing the dignity and the presence of the sacred in the self and the neighbor (Casagram, 2014; O'Hare, 2018). Lenoir (2017), Moses (2015), and Williams (2015) continue to advocate that the themes and guidance found within Merton's writings are still very much needed and applicable today, though Merton originally wrote for a postwar, social revolutionary America. Since the time of Merton's death, scholars in theology, spirituality, literature, ethics, inter-religious dialogue, and education have researched the collections of Merton's writings and have applied themes and spiritual insights to diverse subjects and fields of study (e.g., Del Prete, 1990; Grayson, 2009; Horan, 2011; Rembert, 2017; Williams, 2015). This study aims to explore student experiences of a Catholic high school curriculum to respond to bullying behavior based on the themes of the writings of Thomas Merton, especially through a Christian Humanistic lens.

Del Prete (1990) stated that Merton's view of education cannot be authentically understood restricted to the confines of traditional educational environments, such as a classroom. Merton believed that education focused on the "self-discovery" of the whole person

(Del Prete, 1990, p. 30). Merton (1969/1979) stated “The purpose of education is to show a person how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to his world – not to impose a prefabricated definition of the world, still less an arbitrary definition of the individual himself” (p. 3). Education, for Merton, is not supposed to predefine an individual by confines and ideologies developed by the world but education is a process of recognizing the dignity of the self in concert with the world. For Merton, “self-discovery” should not be identified as a cognitive experience but should be an “existential realization which implies a consciousness and orientation of one’s whole being in love” (Del Prete, 1990, p. 55). This perspective of education, as a transformative experience in self-realization, is gradually becoming acknowledged and explored pedagogically by contemporary educators, Catholic and secular, as well as curriculum theorists since the writings of Merton (Giussani, 2001; Groome, 1999; Henderson & Kesson, 2004; Shimabukuro, 2007; Zimmermann, 2017a).

Although debated and discussed, a pedagogical approach toward self-realization based on an experiential transformation has had little impact on the traditional classroom model in contemporary Catholic educational praxis (Topping, 2015b; Zimmermann, 2017a).

Shimabukuro (2007) stated that similar to the methodology and parables of Jesus of Nazareth, a Catholic school educator needs to integrate the cognitive and formational aspects of the subject matter that is taught to bring the student to a transformational experience. Baumbach (2017) and Topping (2015a) reiterate that the American Catholic educator and Catholic education system needs to reclaim the education of the whole person by not merely teaching religious courses as a history course of religious events, people, and facts, but engaging in the religious experiences grounded in historical context. For Topping (2015a) Catholic education serves three purposes for the life of the student: an ultimate, a remote, and an intermediate purpose. These purposes



offer insight and meaning for the student which are fulfilled in the individual through happiness (the ultimate purpose), culture (the remote purpose), and virtue (the intermediate purpose). In a correspondence from June 1949, Merton foreshadowed Topping's statements regarding happiness as the ultimate purpose in self-realization.

It is terribly hard for people to find happiness in our time. Everything is mixed up. All the wrong ideas and all the wrong values are on top. Everywhere you go you find papers and the movies and the radios telling you that happiness consists in stuffing yourself with food and drink, and dancing and making love. All these things are good and necessary, but they are not the whole reason for existing. They are given to us as a means to an end. The way to be happy is not to love these things for their own sakes, but to use them wisely for the glory of God (Merton, 1989, p. 315).

To achieve happiness as an ultimate purpose, it is important to shift from a secular and reductive view of happiness which is sought in individual gains of wealth, power, pleasure, or honor (Barron & Leonard, 2011). It is the purpose of education to progress to a transcendent perspective of happiness that acknowledges the dignity of one's self and the dignity of relationship with others and God (Lukefahr, 2002; Merton, 1983). It will be from this perspective of happiness, as an ultimate goal and desire of human fulfillment, that the curriculum in this study will be grounded to address bullying of adolescents in a Catholic educational setting.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The bullying and harassment of adolescents are recognized as an epidemic in contemporary culture (Leonard, 2014; Wiseman, 2009). To address the epidemic of bullying in education, schools offer anti-bullying programs to teach students that bullying behavior is

morally wrong and to stop the engagement of physical and emotionally violent and destructive activities (Oliver, 2015; United States Department of Education, 2011). The contemporary models for anti-bullying policies and responses in schools are founded on a basic knowledge-based learning paradigm which reflects dominant bureaucratic management problem-solving solutions (Leonard, 2014). This paradigm is also accompanied by top-down reductionist consequence-based policies for students who do not adhere to the expectations of the school administration (Philippe et al., 2017). Consequences for not following the institutional rules often result in punishments that affect the lives of both the victim and bully by placing a stigma upon both the victim and the bully, and which often leads to perpetuating stereotypes in the minds of teachers and peers of the youth (Huggins, 2016). Current educational policies on bullying have routinely excluded the interpretations of theological, anthropological, and relational perspectives in a solution to the problem of bullying (Philippe et al., 2017). As indicated by Topping (2015a) instead of using a reductionist model to address bullying, Catholic institutions should use a curriculum that embodies an expansive perspective incorporating the collective teachings of Christian tradition. Within an expansive Catholic curriculum, an ethical lens such as Christian Humanism and the themes and writings of Thomas Merton can offer a new perspective to address the systematic problem of bullying in school-age adolescents that focuses on the dignity of the human person and healthy relationships.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to observe the personal beliefs, reflections, and interpretations of adolescents after engaging in a Catholic curriculum response to address adolescent bullying behaviors. Based on the ethical perspective Christian Humanism, and themes found in the writings of Thomas Merton, this curriculum will serve as a first iteration

alternative approach to address bullying from a positive perspective focusing on the dignity of the human person to offer students the opportunity to further discover their self-worth and relationships with others.

Qualitative research endeavors to identify complex interactions and holistic accounts of a problem (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013). Drawing on the qualitative methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship (Eisner, 1976; Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017), this study will analyze data collected to explore trends and themes in the experiences of adolescents, as demonstrated through conversations, thoughts, and writings, regarding a curriculum response to bullying focusing on the dignity and worth of humanity.

This study will consist of a discussion of the development of the organic first iteration of the curriculum and observational research and analysis of the complex interactions of educators and students to address the practical problem of adolescent bullying in a real-world environment. The literature review for this study will explore scholarship that interconnects the topics of bullying, adolescent spirituality, Catholic education, curriculum theory, and will show that the themes and writings of Thomas Merton, especially in concert with a Christian Humanism ethical lens, might be a viable option as a foundation for a positive response to the epidemic of 21<sup>st</sup> century adolescent bullying in a Catholic educational settings.

### **Central Questions**

To research the nature of adolescent students in an all-male Catholic school environment and their engagement with a curriculum alternative responding to bullying behavior, based on the ethical lens of Christian Humanism, the following will serve as the central questions for this study:

1. How do adolescent students engage in the aesthetic experience of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes of Thomas Merton's writings?

2. How do adolescent students interpret and share their experiences of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes of Thomas Merton's writings?

### **Significance of the Study**

The writings and life of Thomas Merton have been previously researched as a foundation for educational theory and praxis (Amodei, 2015; Del Prete, 1990; Taylor, 2002; Thomas, 2018). Merton's spirituality and writings have also been researched, documented, and used to aid in the development of self-discovery and search of identity for young adults and adolescents (Horan, 2011; Loughrey, 2013). Research and application of Thomas Merton's themes as an educational foundation to address adolescent bullying in Catholic education has yet to be pursued.

Due to the explorative and moral nature of this study, by addressing bullying from a perspective of acknowledging and recognizing the human dignity in one's self and the other, several insights to assist adolescent pedagogical practices could emerge. Some of the significant insights and contributions of this study may include: (1) aiding adolescents to recognize, acknowledge, and mature in a perspective of respect and dignity of all humanity, including their own self-worth, and to become more collaborative and community orientated; (2) exploring an alternative curriculum to respond to bullying from a positive, Christian Humanistic, approach to respond to adolescent bullying in Catholic anti-bullying programs; (3) raising awareness in adolescents of larger social justice issues regarding societal outcasting and bullying through stereotyping, especially of groups who have been isolated or stigmatized because of poverty,

disease, gender identification, and/or religious affiliation; and (4) researching and further inspiring the application of themes and writings of Thomas Merton in contemporary social justice education.

The primary aim of this study is to aid adolescents to recognize, acknowledge, and mature with respect and dignity of all humanity and to guide them to become more collaborative and community orientated. Merton (1983) stated: “To love another is to will what is really good for him” (p. 5). The basic nature of humanity necessitates communal interaction and charitable living in relationship with others (Arnold, 1995; Giussani, 2001; Merton, 1983). The adolescent age is one of self-discovery, but through a secular individualistic lens self-discovery can develop into an isolationist focus; on the individual’s desires and passions without regard of their neighbor (Marcia et al., 1993; Wiseman, 2009). It is important to give adolescents the tools and language to develop a dignity of self and recognize the dignity of their neighbor as they begin to reason through personal moral choices and the effect their choices have on others (Malewitz, 2013; Rice et al., 2017; Rohr & Martos, 2005). Several Catholic curriculums, such as *Theology of the Body for Teens* (Evert, Evert, & Butler, 2006) and *Chosen* (Stefanick & Bolster, 2014) have utilized parts of John Paul II’s ethic of the theology of the body, as a guide for such conversations. These curriculums have been adopted by several Catholic diocesan formation programs, as supplements to the Catholic high school curriculum, as well as formational tools for the Sacrament of Confirmation (Stefanick & Bolster, 2014). Rice (2017) advocates for adolescent catechesis and curriculums which embrace diversity, the dignity of the human person, and worth of the individual but little mention is made to address concrete situations effecting adolescents such as bullying behavior and its effect on the perception of one’s self-worth or the effects of stigmatization of others.

This study could pave the way for a re-examination of effective techniques of adolescent anti-bullying programs in Catholic and secular environments. Huggins (2016), Leonard (2014), and Philippe et al. (2017) stated that it is essential to re-assess the way in which anti-bullying programs are developed and presented to adolescents. New technologies, such as Snapchat, Instagram, and other social media avenues are changing the nature of persistent bullying behaviors and how it affects the emotional and psychological health of an adolescent (Hirsch, 2012; Luxton, June, & Fairall, 2012; Rosen, 2011). This study would offer a new perspective to re-examine the definition and root of bullying behavior and hopefully offer a fresh look into new and more effective pedagogical strategies to address bullying behaviors in adolescents.

This study could help educators develop a new perspective and opportunity to raise awareness of larger social justice issues with adolescents, such as societal bullying and outcasting through stereotyping, especially of groups who have been isolated or stigmatized because of poverty, disease, gender identification, and/or religious affiliation. Merton stated that:

A sincere subjective disposition to love everyone does not dispense from energetic and sacrificial social action to restore violated rights to the oppressed, to create work for the workless, so that the hungry may eat and that everyone may have a chance to earn a decent wage. It has unfortunately been all too easy in the past for the man who is himself well fed to entertain the most laudable sentiments of love for his neighbor, while ignoring the fact that his brother is struggling to solve insoluble and tragic problems... The dimensions of Christian love must be expanded and universalized on the same scale as the human problem that is to be met. (Merton, 1967/1979, p. 138)

The themes and writings of Merton continually challenge the reader to action and deeper conversion toward self-discovery instead of passivity and complacency (Merton, 1966; Merton,

1966/2009; Merton, 1980b). Adolescents should no longer be passive observers of the isolated and outcast in the local or larger society, but adolescents should be challenged to engage the effects and realities that creates isolation in the human experience (Gurian, 2017; Malewitz & Pacheco, 2016). This study could not only open a new avenue for adolescents to recognize the dignity of others who are isolated in their local settings but it may also help them to recognize the dignity of individuals affected by group isolation and stigma on a national or international scale. The current standards for the Catholic secondary curriculum, developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), stresses particular focus on the teaching of ethics and morality throughout the course readings and assessments for adolescents (*Doctrinal elements of a curriculum framework for the development of catechetical materials for young people of high school age*, 2008). Today, the USCCB continues to reiterate that authentic catechesis necessitates real and tangible application of moral catechesis as an example of living as a follower of Jesus of Nazareth (*Living as missionary disciples: National directory for catechesis worksheets*, 2017).

This study could also inspire further exploration of the use of themes and writings of Thomas Merton in contemporary social justice issues and application of his writings to a new generation and unexplored audience. As mentioned previously, the writings of Thomas Merton continue to be beneficial for contemporary challenges and social justice issues not fully anticipated within Merton's lifetime. The application of Merton's writings and themes are not exhausted, and this study may introduce ideas and an exploration of other avenues of application of Merton's writings in education or adolescent pedagogy.

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

This qualitative study is grounded upon the use of one conceptual framework and two theoretical perspectives: (a) The conceptual framework is based on an ethical lens comprised from the themes and writings of Thomas Merton, with particular focus to his contribution to the re-emerging ethical perspective of Christian Humanism (Merton, 1979), (b) one theoretical perspective is based on a 4S Understanding which evolves from the 3S Understanding curriculum structure (Henderson & Gornik, 2007; Henderson & Keeson, 2004) and a holistic Catholic pedagogical perspective (Giussani, 2001; Shimabukuro, 2007), while (c) the other theoretical perspective is based on a psychosocial theory, Delta Theory (Tharp, 2012).

The primary concept used to inform this study is the ethical view comprised of the themes and writings of Thomas Merton, with particular focus on the lens of Christian Humanism (Merton, 1979). Christian Humanism is an ethical perspective that argues that all humanity has inherent dignity and worth (Schlag, 2017). This ethic states that the dignity of the human person is grounded in authentic freedom and that the ultimate goal of human fulfillment is the attainment of happiness found by living in authenticity, based on the Gospel message of Jesus of Nazareth (Franklin & Shaw, 1991; Zimmermann, 2017b). The ethical view of Christian Humanism traces its roots to the 2nd and 3rd century, based in the writings of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Augustine, but is most recognized in the historical works of scholars such as Petrarch and Erasmus of Rotterdam, during the Renaissance movement of the 15th century (Backus, 2017; Shaw, Franklin, Kaasa, & Buzicky, 2009). Although Christian Humanism evolved as an ethical theory throughout the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras, it has re-emerged in the 20th century as a response to the horrific violence committed against the dignity of human life (Zimmerman, 2017a). The writings of prominent theologians, social justice advocates, and authors such as: G.K. Chesterton, Dorothy Day, John Paul II, Martin Luther King,



Jr., and Thomas Merton have been associated with the re-emergence of Christian Humanism as an ethical perspective essential in contemporary literature and theology (Francis, 2015; Merton, 1979; Schlag, 2017; Shaw, Franklin, Kaasa, & Buzicky, 2009; Zimmerman, 2017a).

Thomas Merton (1979) wrote directly on the call for greater awareness of Christian Humanism as an ethical view in several essays. Although Merton did not completely devote his writing to the topic of the Christian Humanism, the vast majority of Merton's themes and writings follow the tenets of a Christian Humanist ethic by focusing on the dignity and worth of all of humanity and the search for the authenticity of one's self that is inherently linked and made sacred from the Incarnation (Merton, 1971; Merton, 1979; Merton, 2007; Merton, 2015; Moses, 2015). "Christianity can and must contribute something of its own unique and irreplaceable insights into the value of man, not only in his human nature, but his inalienable dignity as a free person" (Merton, 1967/1979, pg. 138). Merton believed that through the Incarnation the Christian perspective offers a full recognition of the nature and dignity of humanity, that lays a foundation on the human person and societal relationships. Merton stated:

Our modern world cannot attain to peace, and to fully equitable social order, merely by application of laws which act upon man, so to speak, from outside himself. The transformation of society begins within the person. It begins with the maturing and opening out of personal freedom in relation to other freedoms... This means a capacity to be open to others as persons, to desire for others all that we know to be needful for ourselves, all that is required for the full growth and even the temporal happiness of a fully personal existence. (Merton, 1966/1979, pg. 155)

Merton argued that the ultimate happiness of humanity, a goal of the Christian Humanist ethic, was found through four themes, based on the individual and relationship with others: order,

balance, rhythm, and harmony (Ali, 2017; Merton, 1983). The themes of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony offered by Merton were selected by this author to be the basis of the curriculum to respond to bullying behavior in adolescents because of their direct relationships to achieving transcendent happiness, the ultimate goal of human fulfillment.

One of the theoretical perspectives used to inform this study is curriculum wisdom, based on the 3S Understanding curriculum structure (Henderson & Gornik, 2007; Henderson & Kesson, 2004). Curriculum wisdom is a pedagogical theory which states that curriculum should not be defined as a static reducible set of standards but that it should be acknowledged as a verb. The root verb of curriculum, *currere*, is best defined as a complicated, expansive conversation grounded in relationship and practice (Henderson & Kesson, 2004). Curriculum wisdom views the purpose of curriculum as an active conversation grounded on problem solving that elicits a transformative experience in the student and educator. Reza (2008) argued that a basic knowledge-based curriculum structure as a top-down, single-topic, oriented learning perspective is no longer effective for 21<sup>st</sup>-century students. Curriculum wisdom focuses educational planning as an organic and expansive process that recognizes that curriculum is comprised of creative, interdisciplinary connections and collaborative engagement (Henderson & Gornik, 2007). Curriculum wisdom also focuses on a pedagogical perspective that aims to incorporate real-life experiences in the learning process (Ivarsson-Jansson, Cooper, August, & Fryland, 2009). Curriculum wisdom is based on a 3S Understanding learning structure, which includes the connectivity and engagement of the following three parts of a students' learning and experience: subject matter, self-learning, and social learning (Henderson & Kesson, 2004).

A new, distinct model inspired from the 3S Understanding structure was used for this study, which includes the role of a spiritual component as a fourth S, to create a 4S

Understanding. This 4S Understanding framework will explore the interaction of a student's subject matter, self-discovery, social development, and spiritual formation. Catholic educators Giussani (2001) and Shimabukuro (2007) state that Catholic pedagogical curriculum is founded on a dialogue that engages a holistic cognitive and formative maturation of the human person: body, mind, and spirit in concert with the Divine will. Merton (1979) also indicated that educational decisions should be made to help the student know their authentic self and recognize the sacred presence of Christ in the other. Based on these Catholic pedagogical perspectives, a 4S Understanding framework acknowledges that a subject in education should create an experience that leads a student to self-discovery. Throughout the process of self-discovery, the student ought to engage in virtues within social awareness and societal relationships. Finally, these social relationships exist within a spiritual ethic and perspective, such as Christian Humanism, which acknowledges the objective value of human dignity, freedom, and happiness.

The second theoretical perspective used to inform this study is Delta theory, a perspective to implement change in psychosocial systems (Tharp, 2012). Delta Theory posits that "influence and change operate primarily... within psychosocial systems – that is, affiliated persons organized into systems that share values, purpose, and activity" (Tharp, 2012, p. 5). Social systems are initially formed upon common identities and collaborative activities of individuals (Tharp, 2012). To create change, Delta Theory states that the initial, or Beta stage, of comfortable common identity must first be disrupted. Disequilibrium must be created, to move the group from an initial complacent nature to engage a new perspective, the Alpha stage. After disequilibrium is created, a new identity and collaborative experience can occur, which develops into systematic change, the Delta stage. The foundations of Delta Theory were derived from the social behavioral theories of psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (Tharp, 2012). Karpov (2014) and

Moll (2014) indicate that educational praxis can benefit from the work and writings of Vygotsky, by challenging the student to move from a state of complacency to engage new knowledge. Moll (2014) states by using Vygotsky's behavioral theories in pedagogy "education makes us not only what we are but who we are, and who we could become" (p. 1). This view of change and self-discovery parallels both Merton's view of the purpose of education and the transformational goal of curriculum wisdom to fit well together in this study (Merton, 1969/1979). This study will also adapt Delta Theory to incorporate a spiritual perspective. Block (2007) explored how a traditional Jewish practice, teshuvah, sheds insight into ethical pedagogy: "In teshuvah, we turn toward the world to begin the healing that our ethical absence from it has made necessary" (Block, 2007, p. 1). This perspective offers insight into a spiritual dimension of the call to better the world which lacks order because of ethical absences. A social change, as described in Delta Theory, in itself is a neutral action but infused with the lens of teshuvah there becomes a necessity for change to heal and redeem a damaged and suffering world.

The researcher of this study chose these frameworks as the foundations for this study because all three concepts: a) the writings of Thomas Merton in light of Christian Humanism, b) 4S Understanding Curriculum wisdom, and c) Delta Theory infused with a teshuvah lens, include a transformational component that prompt individuals and groups to not be satisfied with complacency but demands action toward change (Block, 2007; Henderson & Gornik, 2007; Merton, 1971; Tharp, 2012). Christian Humanism and the 4S Understanding Curriculum wisdom create avenues for recognizing the essential nature of collaboration and engagement in society within a moral perspective, while Delta theory establishes a systematic approach to implement that change through real and tangible experience.

### **Summary of the Methodology**

The qualitative method used for this study is educational criticism and connoisseurship (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). This methodology emerged from arts-based pedagogy and evaluation (Eisner, 1976; Flinders & Eisner, 1994). Educational criticism and connoisseurship is rooted in the traditions of ethnographic and case study research methods but offers the researcher a more expansive opportunity to explain, explore, and evaluate educational phenomenon in a rich contextual environment. Through this methodology, the researcher serves in the role of a connoisseur of the phenomenon being studied and offers a critical analysis from the gathered data to explicitly illuminate subtlety and nuance in patterns found in the collected data (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Educational criticism and connoisseurship is a methodology that offers guidance, not prediction. This methodology was chosen for this study because of this premise of guidance. Huggins (2016) and Tollafield (2015) indicate that current anti-bullying curriculums do not address the problem of bullying, and may even contribute to or perpetuate the cycle of bullying. New perspectives to address bullying and bullying behavior need to expand and creatively utilize emerging methodologies to address the problem from a different course. Educational criticism and connoisseurship offers the opportunity for a connoisseur, in this study a connoisseur of religious education, to offer critical insights into a holistic perspective of adolescent experiences of a first iteration curriculum, which will offer guidance for further research.

Educational criticism and connoisseurship is grounded on three premises, based on the technique of appraising a subject of art: discernment, appreciation, and valuing (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). The premises of discernment, appreciation, and valuing inform and weigh the usefulness of the gathered data and through the researcher's depth of knowledge offer insights into the data not commonly known by an untrained observer. For a qualitative study

utilizing education criticism and connoisseurship to be effective in research, it must include rich, thick descriptions of the whole context (e.g., environment, tone, rhythm, action, language, etc.) The researcher incorporates sensory description to bring to light the face-value experience as well as the experiences that are usually overlooked or missed because of the in-depth and complex factors recognized only by a connoisseur (Eisner, 1976; Eisner, 2003a). Similar to the appreciation of a piece of art, a connoisseur of art does not merely rely on understanding the historical facts of an artist and the work of art but also has knowledge of the context and possesses the ability to elicit a passionate emotion from the piece of art. Educational criticism and connoisseurship relies upon data in the form of observations, artifacts, and follow-up conversation to clarify and check that the connoisseur understands the studied phenomenon from local and global levels, to the best of his or her ability, to have a holistic perspective to critically analyze and evaluate the subject (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017).

Two challenges associated with the methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship relate to the depth of knowledge of the researcher and the researcher's ability to offer a clear analysis, critique, and consistent explanation of the subject (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Similar to an ethnographic study, a connoisseur examines patterns that define a subject's beliefs and ideologies, such as behavioral traits in a contextual response to a lived cultural reality, through an extended period of observation and an embedded nature which offers intimate knowledge and shared lived-experience with the subject for authentic data (Creswell, 2013; Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017). Reinking and Bradley (2008) posit that an ethnographic methodology is beneficial for educational research, especially when introducing an intervention into a classroom environment because of the real lived-experience of the subject. Throughout the course of this study, field notes, observations, informal follow-ups, video recording, and

transcriptions, as well as collected artifacts in the shape of student reflection essays, embedded in the curriculum, will be used for data collection as triangulation techniques. Member checking will be used to help clarify student beliefs and thoughts, based on initial written assessments, informal interviews, and field notes. Member checking serves as an essential element of accurate interpretation of data collection, especially when the subject being observed may use cultural jargon and body language not necessarily interpreted the same way as adults, like in the culture of adolescence (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017; Wiseman, 2009).

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) indicate that one of the differences between educational criticism and connoisseurship and similar methodologies, such as an ethnographic and case studies, is that the foundational basis of educational criticism and connoisseurship is dependent on the transparency of the researcher in the narrative. The researcher needs to establish structural corroboration, present a persuasive and whole picture, and referential adequacy, consistent and coherent narrative, to establish consensual validity, or trustworthiness in the reader. Similar to an ethnographic study, the embedded nature of the researcher is of paramount importance (Creswell, 2013; Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017). The researcher needs to be aware of the ways they are explicitly and implicitly embedded in the culture. For a connoisseur, it is essential to include nuance and in-depth insights of the subject, but it is just as important not to neglect or pass over the commonplace aspects of the subject because of too much familiarity of the subject (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Secondly, it is essential to remember that a connoisseur has a unique understanding and appreciation of the subject which may or may not be transferable or could be interpreted differently from the perspective of another connoisseur.

The purpose of educational criticism and connoisseurship is to offer guidance. Qualitative research findings are often limited to the environment in which the implementation occurs (van den Akker, Gravemeijer, McKenney, & Nieveen, 2006). It is risky and often impractical to assume that the results will correspond with a large-scale implementation. The author accepts such a limitation of the study but challenges that such data could be used as a springboard for further research on the application of the premise themes in other environments (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017).

Although his writings have remained influential, Thomas Merton's life has recently returned to more prominence due to the centennial celebrations of his birth in 2015 (Henry & Montaldo, 2014; Morris-Young, 2015), and the fiftieth anniversary of his death, in 2018. Many of these celebrations occurred in and around significant local areas connected with the life of Merton, such as Columbia University, but especially at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky, where the Merton Center is located (The Merton Center, 2017). This study has developed from that re-emerging enthusiasm of the application of the writings of Thomas Merton to contemporary issues. Although this study is drawing upon themes that are pertinent to contemporary adolescents, the excitement surrounding the anniversary celebrations of Merton's life may not sustain an intense fervor for applying Merton's writings in pedagogical environments after the anniversary celebrations have ended. Likewise, another connoisseur of the writing of Thomas Merton might argue or interpret the application of Merton's themes and writings from a different perspective than the author of this study. It is also acknowledged that the study's central figure Thomas Merton and his themes and writings might be regarded as a controversial within certain groupings of Catholicism, more fundamental Catholics may object to



Merton being used as a model of the faith due to the honest accounts of his human frailty to temptation and passionate lifestyle that is not often associated with strict monasticism.

### **Brief Biography of Individuals Significant for this Study**

Thomas Merton corresponded and interacted with countless celebrities as well as ordinary people that had a profound effect on his life and writings. For the ease of the reader, the following list will offer a short context of the significant individuals that had a direct effect on Thomas Merton's life and writings. The following individuals will be referenced multiple times throughout the course of this study because of that connection. This list will be limited to individuals who would not be commonly known but are nonetheless significant within their role in Merton scholarship especially in connection to the topics of bullying, adolescent spirituality, and Catholic education.

**Suzanne Butorovich** (1950- ) Ms. Butorovich initiated correspondence with Thomas Merton as a junior in high school, for her underground school newspaper in San Francisco (Atkinson, 2013; Merton, 1989). They corresponded between June 1967 and November 1968. There were 23 recorded letters from Merton to Ms. Butorovich, which compose the largest collection of correspondence between Merton and an adolescent (Merton, 1989; The Thomas Merton Center, 2018a). On October 21, 1968, Merton had dinner with Ms. Butorovich and her family in California on his way to Asia (Atkinson, 2013; The Thomas Merton Center, 2018a). Ms. Butorovich was also mentioned to be the furthest traveled attendee at Merton's funeral (Atkinson, 2013).

**Thomas "Fr. Louis" Merton** (1915-1968) was a Cistercian monk, Catholic priest, and recognized prolific author of spirituality, poet, civil rights activist, and inter-religious dialogue (Crompton, 2004; Morris-Young, 2015). He is remembered as a nonviolent resistor to war

through his many poems and essays against the arms race, the effects of World War II and Vietnam (Merton, 1962; Merton, 1980b; Merton, 1994). Merton became lifelong friends with many prominent scholars and spiritual leaders throughout his lifetime (Merton, 1989; Merton, 1994). His writings continue to offer insights in the fields of theology, education, literature, and ecumenism (Grayson, 2009; Horan, 2014a; Letayf, 2015; Peach, 2015).

**John Paul Merton** (1918-1943) was the only brother of Thomas Merton (Crompton, 2004; Merton, 1999). The brothers did not spend much time together in their youth because John Paul was raised by his maternal grandparents, while Thomas accompanied this father throughout Europe (Merton, 1999). John Paul entered the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1941. During leave in July 1942, John Paul visited Gethsemani and was baptized Catholic (The Merton Center, 2018b). John Paul died when his plane was shot down and crashed in 1943 (Merton, 1999).

**Charles Van Doren** (1926- ) is the son of Mark Van Doren. He is a writer, editor, and intellectual. Charles was a teacher at Columbia University before becoming a celebrity on the popular game show *Twenty-One* (Van Doren, 2008). His winning streak became a national sensation and led him to be featured on the cover of the February 11, 1957, edition of *Time* magazine (Vandivert, 1957). In 1959, Charles testified before the United States Congress regarding his complicity with the rigged television game show *Twenty-One* and became the focus of a national scandal, public contempt, and ostracization followed (Van Doren, 2008).

**Mark Van Doren** (1894-1972) was a Pulitzer Prize recipient, academic, and American poet (Granger Book Co., 1983). Mark was a professor of English literature at Columbia University and had Thomas Merton as a student (Merton, 1999). Merton recalls Mark as a ‘true’ and remarkable educator (Del Prete, 1991; Merton, 1999, p. 153). Merton and Van Doren remained

close and continued to have correspondence until Merton's death in 1968 (Merton, 1989; Van Doren, 1987).

**Fr. Daniel "Dan" Walsh** (1907-1975) was a Catholic philosopher, professor, and priest (Daggy, 1980). Dan, along with Mark Van Doren, was mentioned to be the educators of most influence on the life of Thomas Merton (Distefano, 1980; Merton, 1999). Thomas Merton first discussed his discernment of a Catholic vocation with Dan, who recommended Merton to inquire with the Franciscans (Horan, 2014a; Merton, 1999). Walsh later joined Merton at Gethsemani as a professor of philosophy. He was later ordained a priest in 1967 (Distefano, 1980). Merton and Walsh remained close and continued to correspond with each other until Merton's death in 1968 (Distefano, 1980; Merton, 1989).

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Throughout the course of this study, the following terms will use specific definitions related to the nature of the topics of bullying, adolescent spirituality, Catholic education, and curriculum. The following definitions will serve to clarify any ambiguity of meaning for such terms and topics. To establish continuity with previous Catholic catechetical traditions and research key terms will be defined verbatim for credibility and to illustrate their lineage and use within Catholic curriculum expectations and standards.

**Authenticity** – the creation, discovery, and development of one's true self apart from the demand or dependence of pre-defined societal labels or boundaries (Merton, 1969/1979; Taylor, 1991).

**Bullying** – The "repetition of negative actions (physical, verbal, or psychological) specifically directed at a target individual over time, in the presence of a power differential between the parties involved" (Huggins, 2016, p. 169).

**Bullying Behavior** - The specific actions (physical, verbal, or psychological) used by a bully over a victim.

**Catechesis** - “is an education in the faith of children, young people, and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of the Christian life” (John Paul II, 1979, #18).

**Christian Humanism** – An ethical lens which views that human flourishing, happiness, and dignity can only be fully realized through a whole perspective of the body, mind, and spirit, because of its source and relationship with God, rooted in the Incarnation (Franklin & Shaw, 1991; Hittinger, 2017; Merton, 1966/1979; Merton, 1967/1979).

**Clique** – a group founded on loyalty to an established ideology, usually based on an us-versus-them dynamic (Wiseman, 2009).

**Connoisseurship** - the ability to make fine nuanced distinctions between complex and subtle contextual qualities (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017).

**Criticism** - to judge and/or disclose what has been learned about a subject through past acquired knowledge (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017).

**Curriculum** – “all of the experiences that children have while at school.” (Shimabukuro, 2007, p. ix).

**Curriculum wisdom** – a concise pedagogical approach of the complex and nuanced aspects of understanding curriculum as an educational dialogue, while infusing and cultivating civic virtues and a moral way of life in the educational process (Henderson & Kesson, 2004, pp. 4, 8).

**Education** - The process to show a person “how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to his world – not to impose a prefabricated definition of the world, still less an arbitrary definition of the individual himself” (Merton, 1969/1979, p. 3).

**Educational criticism and connoisseurship** - a qualitative research methodology that relies on clearly conveying the nuanced judgments and knowledge of the researcher to illuminate the complexities and holistic context of an educational theory and/or praxis.

**Engage (student engagement)** – the involvement of students in the process of learning and cognitive maturation (Axelson & Flick, 2010).

**Happiness** - The ultimate purpose and desire of human fulfillment (Topping, 2015b).

**Incarnation** – The Catholic doctrine that states “that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it” and thus make humanity partakers in the divine nature (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2000, #460 & #461).

**Moral Therapeutic Deism** - A term defining the belief system compiled from roughly three thousand adolescents surveyed during the National Study of Youth and Religion (2003). The following are the tenets which composed Moral Therapeutic Deism: (a) A vision of God as creator and watcher over human life, but not necessarily an active force unless needed; (b) God’s desire of people to be good and nice to others; (c) The central goal of life is happiness and to feel good about one’s self; (d) Good people go to heaven after death. (Smith & Denton, 2005).

**Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, OCSO (or ‘Trappist’)** - A contemplative religious order within the Roman Catholic Church, which traces its origin from the Rule of St. Benedict (529) and the larger Cistercian Order (1098). The vows of a Trappist include: obedience, stability, conversion of life, poverty, and celibate chastity (Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, 2017).

**Other(s)** - “an individual - though perhaps not fully a person - who does not embody or express the norms of the community” (Huggins, 2016, p. 170).

**Self-discovery** – The process of the “activation of that inmost center... ‘spark’” which defines one’s true self (Merton, 1969/1979, pp. 9-10).

**Teshuvah** – the process and decision to change one’s life “to being the healing in a world that our ethical absence from it has made necessary,” which also leads to the healing in one’s own life (Block, 2007, p. 1).

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)** - The USCCB is the collection of all active and retired members of the Catholic hierarchy in the United States and Virgin Islands. It consists of 16 committees, which includes the guidance and direction of all Catholic Education curriculums.

**3S Understanding (curriculum framework)** - “The framework encourages a balanced approach to traditional subject-centered concerns and progressive student-centered and society-centered advocacies” (Henderson & Kesson, 2004, p. 93).

**4S Understanding (curriculum framework)** - a distinct framework, inspired from the 3S Understanding structure, which focuses on the interconnectivity between the learning of subject matter, self-discovery, social advocacy, and spiritual virtue that relates to transcendent realities and focuses on an engaging, holistic pedagogical perspective of the student: body, mind, and spirit.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Review of the Literature**

The dread of being open to the ideas of others generally comes from our hidden insecurity about our own convictions. We fear that we may be ‘converted’ - or perverted

by a pernicious doctrine. On the other hand, if we are mature and objective in our open-mindedness, we may find that by viewing things from a basically different perspective—that of our adversary—we discover our own truth in a new light and are able to understand our own ideal more realistically (Merton, 1995a, p. 255)

This chapter will provide pertinent literature that will establish and clarify the state of bullying behavior as related to Catholic pedagogical practices for adolescents. First, this study will establish current definitions and responses to bullying behavior in educational practice. Then, focus will be paid toward best practices and research regarding adolescent spirituality. Thirdly, this chapter will review Catholic education, especially its unique perspective of a pedagogical tradition geared toward the formation of the wholeness of the human person. All three of these topic sections, bullying behavior, adolescent spirituality, and Catholic education will begin with an anchor founded upon direct examples from the life of Thomas Merton whose life and thematic writings were used as the basis of the curriculum that will be studied in this qualitative analysis. This anchor will serve as support to establish that Merton's life and writings have a concrete connection with life challenges within the stage of adolescence and offer insight into the contemporary concerns regarding the fields of bullying, adolescent spirituality, and Catholic education. Finally, this chapter will mention pertinent curriculum theory applicable to this study, specifically the 4S Understanding curriculum structure which was utilized as the vehicle to bring adolescents to dialogue about bullying behavior and its consequences on the dignity of the human person. Thomas Merton was chosen as a lens for this curriculum study because of his writings on social justice, especially his writings on the dignity of the human person and his innovative perspective of education (Del Prete, 1990; Merton, 1979; Merton, 1983; Moses, 2015). To preserve the authenticity of the use of language, quotations and vignettes from

Merton's life, all correspondence and writings of Thomas Merton used throughout this study will be verbatim from original texts.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is a common experience within contemporary culture. Examples of bullying have been well documented in schools, the workplace, politics, and the broad society through social stereotypes throughout the last two centuries (Boske & Oslanloo, 2015; Oliver, 2015; Rigby, 2003). Some critics indicate that bullying is just part of human nature, while other scholars state that bullying behaviors are personal choices and not a natural human response (Huggins, 2016; Tollafield, 2015). Many bullying behaviors have become so commonplace that they are not acknowledged as harmful to others, much like the stereotypes of racism and sexism of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century America (Merton, 1989; Tollafield, 2015). Scholars state that it is necessary to address the destructive nature of bullying from new perspectives that may offer greater change in the heart and attitudes of adolescents (Huggins, 2016; Leonard, 2014).

Although Thomas Merton was a Catholic monk who lived in a monastery and hermitage physically located away from the direct influence of the issues that affected the American post-war consciousness, he did not shy away from advocating for moral change regarding immoral actions that were embedded culturally and accepted, such as institutional racism and violence, especially generated from war (Merton, 1980b; Merton, 1994). In his essay, *Letter to an Innocent Bystander* (1966), Merton stated that a societal bystander who complacently lives within a society of immoral norms and does not act for moral change cannot be considered innocent. He argued that the very lack of engagement to correct the moral wrong casts guilt on the complicit bystander (Merton, 1966). This challenging perspective of Merton continues to



serve as a reminder that advocates for change of socially accepted moral wrongs are essential in every society.

One such moral wrong affecting contemporary society is bullying (Huggins, 2016). Violent actions, derogatory language, and ostracism in adolescent relationships have become commonplace in school settings (Wiseman, 2009; United States Department of Education, 2011; Boske & Osanloo, 2015). Boske and Osanloo (2015), Hudnall (2015), and Wirth (2015) posit that culture can no longer be permitted to dismiss or neglect action toward addressing adolescent bullying; bullying behaviors ought to be recognized as an immediate concern because it often evolves into further grave behaviors, such as isolation, depression, and suicidal ideation and actions.

**Merton and bullying.** The writings and life of Thomas Merton can offer insights into bullying behavior as well as insights into the consequences that bullying behavior can have upon victims, especially from a spiritual perspective. In his writings, Merton offered testimony to instances in his youth where he was at times a bully and other times when he was a victim of the bullying behaviors of others (Merton, 1999). In his autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton recounts several experiences of involvement in bullying behavior. Merton's recollections of the experiences of bullying behavior are not recorded as isolated events from his past, but each recollected experience is contextually spiritualized exploring the spiritual isolation and separation that was created between the bully and victim. The following vignettes serve as a few instances of Merton's experiences of bullying behaviors as well as the spiritual reflection that Merton offered upon those situations.

In one of Merton's clearest memories of his younger brother, John Paul, Merton recalled an event where he physically bullied and forcibly rejected his brother's company. Merton (1999)

explained that while he and his neighborhood friends were building a fort they purposefully excluded the younger children of the neighborhood:

We severely prohibited John Paul and Russ's little brother Tommy and their friends from coming anywhere near us. And if they did try to come and get into our hut, or even look at it, we would chase them away with stones. (Merton, 1999, p. 25).

Merton acknowledged that he created physical distance and used physical harm to separate his brother and the younger children in the neighborhood to demonstrate the superiority of his age and that of his friends over the younger children. Merton clearly recalled that John Paul did not leave after being pelted by stones but stayed at a safe distance from where the stones could hit him and continued to stare towards the fort. John Paul did not cry or run away but stood there full of emotion: anger, offense, emptiness and deep sadness (p. 26). In his autobiography, Merton reflected with regret upon his actions and spiritualized the isolation and rejection that occurred from his actions:

This terrible situation is the pattern and prototype of all sin: the deliberate and formal will to reject disinterested love for us for the purely arbitrary reason that we simply do not want it. (Merton, 1999, p. 26).

This reflection on the isolation and rejection of communion that occurs from bullying behavior offers insight into Merton's view of the powerful human desire of love, community, and the suffering and pain that comes from the rejection of that desire.

In *Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton also recalled where he experienced bullying behavior, this time as a victim (Merton, 1999). He experienced rejection and verbal and physical abuse from the peers in his grade school when he first entered Lycée in Montauban, France, as an eleven-year-old student. His anxiousness and lack of fluency in the French language on his first

day of school caused him to become paralyzed in the midst of his peers; although by the end of the following year he was at the top of his class in French. The ridicule and isolation he initially received from his peers at the school stayed with him as he clearly remembered:

They began to kick me, and to pull and twist my ears, and push me around, and shout various kinds of insults. I learned a great deal of obscenity and blasphemy in the first few days, simply by being the direct or indirect object of so much of it... I knew for the first time in my life the pangs of desolation and emptiness and abandonment (Merton, 1999, p. 54)

Again, Merton spiritually reflected upon the bullying events and the actions that left him with a feeling of emptiness and sadness. Merton (1999) stated, that although the students were mild and peaceful individually, when a certain group of boys came together who were “physically stronger than anybody else” they acted as though they were possessed by a diabolical spirit, like a “wolf-pack” (p. 55). Wiseman (2009) stated that the ‘wolf-pack’ and clique ideologies are based upon exuding power over other groups. These type of group ideologies and negative dynamics are still a common occurrence in adolescent communities (Boske & Oslanoo, 2015; Huggins, 2016; Leonard, 2014).

Group aggression and bullying behaviors were not only discussed in Merton’s writings from his time as a school-aged youth but also become a prominent theme in the social justice writings later in his life (Merton; 1971; Merton, 1980a; Merton, 1989; Merton, 1994). Much of Merton’s later writings and reflections about bullying behaviors were less about actions between individuals but focused on actions and events engaged between ideological groups, such as war, national racism, and scapegoating.

One example that demonstrated Merton's frustration and scathing view of cultural bullying involved Charles Van Doren, the son of one of Merton's lifelong friends and favorite Columbia professors, Mark Van Doren (Merton, 1959). In 1957, Charles Van Doren was a contestant in the nationally syndicated television game show, *Twenty-One*. Throughout his successful 14-week winning streak on the game show, Charles received national notoriety for his knowledge and winnings (Vandivert, 1957). In 1959, though, Charles was implicated, by a previous disgruntled contestant of the game show, in a national scandal that claimed the quiz show was perpetrating a fraud by giving the contestants access to the answers of questions before filming. The scandal was later loosely dramatized in the Academy Award-nominated film *Quiz Show* (Redford, 1994). Charles had to testify before Congress, between November 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 1959, in the federal investigation of television quiz shows (Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, 1959). Because of his notoriety and his incriminating testimony, Charles became a national scapegoat because of the national scandal (Van Doren, 2008). On November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1959, Merton wrote a correspondence to Charles Van Doren referring to the quiz show scandal, offering encouragement in the wake of the isolation and stigmatization which were consequences of the verbal and psychological bullying behaviors that Van Doren experienced from the wake of the national scandal:

This is actually a great moral and psychological problem in our country I think. It is actually what we are doing as a nation in the world today: we are being deceptive, and more than that we are being aggressive, selfish, unjust, pharasaically [sic] pious etc, and counting on our sincerity and subjective 'good will', our feeling that we are nice guys, to get us by. It scares me to death, it is terrible. And of course it is in me, as well as in everybody. We are all you [sic], at the moment, and there is no consolation in the fact

except for those of us who may be able to see the fact. The sad part is that most people refuse to see that you are all of them. In rejecting you, those who have rejected you have rejected what they ought to love and cherish in themselves (Merton, 1959).

Merton clearly indicated that the emotional isolation of the American public's attitude to the scandal stigmatized Charles, while also dehumanizing his achievements in the opinion of the public. Similar to his reflections in *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton's spiritual view of the situation offers an important perspective into the nature of bullying behavior: when one person becomes isolated from the whole community, everyone within the group suffers because of that isolation. This perspective, alluded to by Merton, which recognizes a deep interconnectivity between the success or sins of an individual and the whole community traces its roots to ancient Judeo-Christian Scriptures (Ex. 12:1-16).

**Defining bullying.** There are two recognized forms of bullying behavior: physical and verbal (Boske, 2015b). Actions of physical aggression perpetrated by a bully upon a victim are the most common images associated with bullying (Garbarino & deLara, 2002). Physical bullying behavior can range from shoving, cutting, burning, predatory behavior such as sexual touching or stalking, or extreme assaulting behaviors such as broken bones or homicides (McGuinness & Keltner, 2011; Oliver, 2015). One common aspect in physical bullying is that there exists an inequality in physical appearance or physical power of the bully over the victim, based on differences in a disability, height, weight, or gender (Boske & Osanloo, 2015).

Although bullying behavior is easily recognized and identified in examples of physical abuse it is also experienced through verbal abuse, stereotyping, stigmatizing, or personal or social prejudice (Tollafeld, 2015). Verbal abuses such as vulgarities based on race, sexuality, sexual expression, physical appearances, and social status are slowly becoming more

recognized forms of bullying (Berzsenyi, 2004; Hudnall, 2015; Wiseman, 2009). Repeated verbal assaults that lead to the alienation or seclusion of an individual from a group are also identified as bullying behaviors (Huggins, 2016; Leonard, 2014). Sarcasm and shaming are also common forms of verbal harassment. Unfortunately these verbal actions are not usually associated with bullying behavior because they often take a more culturally accepted form, such as sexualized jokes or disparaging terms or gestures (Tollafield, 2015).

The Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) is a valid and nationally recognized tool to collect data on bullying in schools (Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006). Through the OBVQ, identification of bullying behavior includes vocabulary incorporating the following actions: name calling/teasing, circulated rumors, exclusion, sexual harassment, racial harassment, verbal threats, and text/cyber bullying (Oliver, 2015). Bullying behavior can range from teasing and occasional neighborhood physical altercations to extremely violent actions that can be as severe as consistently unrelenting psychological abuse (Boske & Oslanoo, 2015; Sax, 2007). Some scholars argue that the extreme forms of bullying behaviors of psychological abuse can lead to adolescents turning to suicide to escape consistent harassment (Galas, 1994; Hawton, Rodham, Evans, & Weatherall, 2002; Skinner & McFaull, 2012). The connection between bullying and suicide has become so prominent that it has been used as a plotline of the popular novel and Netflix adaptation, *13 Reasons Why* (Asher, 2007; Incaprera, 2017). Ayers et al. (2017) indicated that after the Netflix series aired Google search engine queries more than doubled regarding suicide lyrics and ideation. Adolescent bullying and its effects have become so prevalent nationally that its widespread occurrence has been deemed an epidemic (Leonard, 2014).

Scholars have offered several definitions to identify bullying behavior. Boske and Osanloo (2015, p. xv) state that bullying is a “verbal and/or physical aggression... repeated over a period of time. Such behaviors involve an imbalance of power between the victim and aggressor(s).” Bullying has also been defined as “a repetition of negative actions (physical, verbal, or psychological) specifically directed at a target individual over time, in the presence of a power differential between the parties involved” (Huggins, 2016, p. 169). The United States Department of Education (2011, p. 1) stated “(r)esearchers have traditionally defined bullying as a repeated pattern of aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power and that purposefully inflicts harm on the bullying victim.” Although not specifically the same terminology, these three definitions offer the common trends associated with a definition of bullying behavior: (a) repetitive actions of aggression and (b) an imbalance of power between the bully and victim.

**Statistics on bullying.** The frequency and persistence of adolescent bullying in schools as well as the psychological distress, physical exhaustion, and self-harm present in victims of bullying behaviors have become a growing concern of parents and educators (Garbarino & deLara, 2002; Rigby, 2003). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016) recently reported that 20% of high school students reported being bullied on school grounds, while 16% reported being bullied over the Internet within the previous year. Boske and Osanloo (2015) indicate that much of the reported data on school bullying should be considered underestimates since students do not report all incidents of bullying to school faculty. Reasons for large numbers of unreported incidents in most survey data often includes: fear of further bullying, not wanting to be seen as a tattle-tale, not trusting adults at the school to resolve the situation in a positive way, or trying to resolve the situation on their own (Sherman, 2015; Turley, 2015). Leonard (2014) stated that

bullying should be acknowledged as an epidemic, indicating that up to 83% of girls and 79% of boys report being bullied at school or online throughout the course of their schooling years.

Garbarino and deLara (2002) indicate that one challenge with attempting to address and resolve bullying in educational settings is that there are many educators and parents that do not acknowledge that bullying is a grave issue among adolescents. The seriousness of bullying can often be discarded in the minds of adults by stating that the actions are: normal adolescent behaviors, teasing, exaggerated, provoked, or dismissed as a stage that will pass (Leonard, 2014; Sax, 2010). Comments that do not take bullying behavior seriously negate the trust that the victim has in the individual that they seek out for advice and can lead the victim to feel further isolation and rejection in their life situations (Tollafeld, 2015).

**Contributing factors of bullying behavior.** Identifying all of the factors that motivate adolescents to engage in bullying behavior is more expansive and complicated than a simple list (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Sheehan, 2015). Some of the most common contributing factors to bullying behavior that have been identified by scholars will be discussed briefly to indicate the complexity of trying to address and respond to adolescent bullying behaviors in a reductionistic perspective. The following factors that contribute to adolescent bullying behaviors will be discussed: (a) peer pressure and the desire for peer acceptance (Huggins, 2016; Wiseman, 2009); (b) self-esteem and personal insecurities (Leonard, 2014; Sax, 2007); and (c) abuse or humiliation (Huggins, 2016; Tollafeld, 2015).

**Peer pressure.** One of the contributing factors in adolescent bullying is the power of ideological group dynamics found in cliques, peer pressure, or peer identification (Huggins, 2016; Wiseman, 2009). For adolescents, peer groups offer a sense of inclusion and a feeling of worth (Wiseman, 2009). The human race is social in nature and inherently desires to connect with others (Arnold,



1995; Merton, 1983). As an adolescent starts to mature into independence and young adulthood the acknowledgment of popularity within a peer group, acceptance of ideas, number of friends, and response of inclusion in peer communities equates to worth and value (Boske, 2015b; Rohr & Martos, 2005). When excluded from such groups and community activities, an adolescent believes that they have little worth or value in the eyes of others (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Tollafield, 2015; Wiseman, 2009).

Peer groups can be positive or negative, depending on the ideology of the group (Bond, 2014; Huggins, 2016). When a peer group is founded on aspects of exclusion, a dynamic within the group creates a separation between the like-minded group and those who are seen as different to that group (Merton, 1989; Wiseman, 2009). Huggins (2016) refers to those separated from the clique, as the other; an individual who does not embody the community norms and is considered a threat to the group identity. In a clique, a group of adolescents are bonded or identified by a strong common belief which often forces isolation or stigmatization upon the other. Over time while the bond strengthens among the members of the clique, the separation of the stigmatized other widens until the other is not only ridiculed for their lack of inclusion but becomes dehumanized in word and action by the clique (Huggins, 2016; Wiseman, 2009).

***Self-esteem insecurities.*** Challenges to an adolescent's self-esteem and personal insecurities can also manifest into bullying of other adolescents (Leonard, 2014). As adolescents mature they negotiate new feelings and hormonal imbalances. In search of self-discovery, adolescents will test and challenge previously taught doctrines and dogmas they find their beliefs and expectations (Giussani, 2001; Gurian, 2017; Marcia et al., 1993). Some of the situations and boundaries that adolescents test and explore during this period of their life can be seen in mainstream culture as taboo (Haley, 1993; Kindlon & Thompson, 2000). The emotional struggle of conformity to

cultural expectations does not leave an adolescent unaffected but plays a significant role in their life and choices (Tollafield, 2015). Many adolescents do not know how to control their feelings or know the expected or proper response in life situations. From being cut from a sports team, the end of a relationship, or family issues like a divorce, adolescents can become emotionally overwhelmed without having the discipline and neurobiological development to control their actions and emotional outbursts that can seriously affect their relationships with others (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Leonard, 2014; Sax, 2007).

As an adolescent becomes hurt, that emotion can become an internal loop that consistently shapes the identity of the adolescent and defines their worth and the way he or she believes others value their presence (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Sax, 2007). Without healthy ways of acknowledging their dignity, an adolescent can believe that an aggressive solution is the only option to stop the emotional pain, such as when an adolescent engages in cutting, hurting others physically or verbally, or in extreme forms in suicidal ideation or homicide (Leonard, 2014; Sheehan, 2015). Since these types of responses are not socially accepted the adolescent will feel isolated and will try to negotiate their feelings with the advice of peers instead of someone with more mature advice (Huggins, 2016; Sax, 2007). As the behavior becomes more unacceptable socially, the adolescent will often isolate further and further from the help and guidance of an established or traditional community.

***Abuse or humiliation.*** Scholars have also indicated that bullying and violent actions toward others may generate from abusive events that an adolescent has previously experienced, creating a further cycle of abuse in the future (Haley, 1993; Huggins, 2016; Kindlon & Thompson, 2000). Through school, family life, friendships, and other community affiliations adolescents learn how to interact with others in a socially acceptable way. When moments of humiliation,

uncomfortable touch, or physical or emotional violence becomes repetitive and treated as appropriate or acceptable in a friendship, classroom, playground, or family setting an adolescent can develop a malformed view of morality and social norms (Oliver, 2015; Tollafield, 2015; Watson, 2013). Such moments have a lasting impact on the development and nature of the adolescent as they grow (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000). For instance, an adolescent who manipulates and coerces others to achieve a specific desired result will repeat such actions for future desired results, forming a habit and identity (Marcia et al., 1993).

The challenge with addressing the psychological factors involved with experiences of previous abuse is that it is extremely difficult and dangerous to determine the origin of such behavior without the aid of professional psychological assistance (Marcia et al., 1993; Sax, 2007). Kindlon and Thompson (2000) also indicated that when an adolescent uses aggressive behaviors, especially with a history of abuse experiences, the actions could be defensive rather than offensive in nature. The world is often interpreted as a threatening and fearful place for an adolescent who has experienced abuse (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Kinnane, 2008/2011). It is extremely difficult to understand the motivations and mindset of an adolescent negotiating abuse if an individual does not interpret the world in a hostile way.

The expectations and needs of each adolescent are unique, and the contributing factors that precipitate bullying behavior may not be the same common underlying problem for each adolescent (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Sax, 2007; Wiseman, 2009). Cliques, abusive relationships, and self-esteem challenges can distort the authentic recognition of the dignity of the human person, and instead of filling a longing for wholeness in the human person an individual can develop disordered desires and goals (Huggins, 2016; Merton, 1983; Merton, 1999).

**Root of the problem.** Although these three trends: peer pressure, self-esteem, and abuse, do not comprise an exhaustive list of contributing factors of bullying behavior they offer insights into a web of the expansive inter-connective influences that often lead to bullying. These trends also shed light on the individual and self-awareness of both the victim and bully. In response to the bullying behavior and the prejudicial attitudes towards African-Americans in the American 1960's Merton wrote:

[People] instinctively censor their own ideas of themselves and others: the traits they *like* [sic], they tend to see in themselves and in their friends. The traits they don't like they see in strangers, aliens, and those who are different from themselves. Then they feel they can punish these other people for being different, bad, or wrong, etc. Instead of having to admit evil in themselves, and having to live with it, they project it on others. (Merton, 1989, p. 358)

Merton asserts that social interaction and social separation are based on commonality and differences. The separation of individuals of like-mindedness from individuals of different perspectives creates an isolation or stigma upon the differences that create labels and definitions of separation (Huggins, 2016).

As youth define their role in various micro-communities, children suffering from instabilities, lacking a holistic perspective in the acknowledgment of their own dignity will often claim power by defining norms for the community, often through violent actions and responses (Leiner et al., 2014). Individuals who are seen as a threat to those claiming power and establishing the community norms are labeled as other, and ridiculed, then ostracized (Huggins, 2016). Huggins (2016) stated that the labeling and process of dehumanization cast upon the nonconformist of the community norm, through an assigned stigma, is the root of the

perpetuation of bullying in aggressors, and even individuals who attempt to address or resolve the bullying behavior.

**Current policies to respond to bullying in school settings.** To respond to bullying behaviors in schools, adolescent students, educators, and administrators have indicated that there is an urgency for a new perspective for programs to respond and remove bullying behaviors (Boske & Osanloo, 2015; Garbarino & deLara, 2002; Philippe et al., 2017). Clear communication of the policies used to address bullying should be an essential component of school faculty to identify and respond to stop bullying behavior (United States Department of Education, 2011; Oliver, 2015). There are two common perspectives that have become traditional approaches to address bullying in educational settings: (a) policies that attempt to reform behaviors in the bully; and (b) policies that attempt to immediately curb bullying behavior through severe consequences (Boske, 2015a; Philippe et al., 2017).

**Reform behaviors.** Common anti-bullying intervention policies for adolescents involve the call to respect others through tolerance, as a response to address bullying behaviors (Leonard, 2014; Meredith, 2015). Anti-bully policy responses based on an approach of tolerance use identifying labels to raise awareness of bullying behavior (Oliver, 2015). Groups that easily become victims because of the imbalance of power, such as nerds, geeks, those of diverse sexual identity and gender expression, as well as those of different culture or religious backgrounds can often become targets because of their differences (Berzsenyi, 2004; Huggins, 2016; Tollafeld, 2015). Teasing, gossiping, and separating individuals or groups for social acceptance are common ways to create such a wedge between group ideologies, separating the accepted group from the outcast group (Rhodes, 2015; Wiseman, 2009). Acknowledging or identifying the undesired behaviors a bully, or potential bully, is supposed to recognize and develop empathy for a victim of such

behaviors (Meredith, 2015). Through identification and tolerance policies, an individual or group becomes stigmatized by being singled out and can become a greater source of bullying instead of the opposite (Huggins, 2016).

Policies attempting to reform bullying behavior are tied to tier-based consequences for the severity of an offense against a protected group, offering students opportunities to learn and mature from previous failures (United States Department of Education, 2011; Philippe et al., 2017). This type of top-down perspective for anti-bullying policies is dependent, and often only effective, based upon the expectations and beliefs of the governing body (Tollafield, 2015).

***Immediate and severe consequences.*** To immediately curb aggressive actions from repeating many schools have instituted zero-tolerance policies (Garbarino & deLara, 2002; Sax, 2007; Sheehan, 2015). A zero-tolerance policy is an anti-bullying policy that does not allow one occurrence of bullying to occur without extreme consequences. Students are held accountable in extreme forms of consequences such as suspension, expulsion, or legal consequences to create a mirrored effect of the extreme nature of the offense (Rigby, 2003). The purpose of a zero-tolerance policy is to create and protect a safe environment where bullying and violent behavior is quickly identified as unacceptable and immediately removed.

Zero-tolerance policies often seem arbitrary and contradictory to youth (Leonard, 2014). Zero-tolerance policies create confusion in the reasoning of the youth when addressing how to recognize and understand the severity of bullying behavior (Sax, 2007). Wolfe (2010) states that neuroscience indicates that the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that is responsible for ethical/moral behavior, is still in the developmental stages during adolescence; the full comprehension of severe policies, such as a zero-tolerance policy, for an adolescent may not be understood in the same way as by an adult. Although the purpose of a zero-tolerance policy

could be clear to an adult, an adolescent may interpret that tolerance and respectfulness is required for others and their differences but when a mistake is made, the policy of a school is for an administrator to not be tolerant upon the adolescent. By not fully comprehending the expectation and purpose of a zero-tolerance policy, adolescents can lose trust in their superiors because of an interpretive perspective of hypocrisy, as well as become confused, frustrated, and feel unjustly treated by school superiors (Leonard, 2014).

**An alternative perspective.** Creating an alternative cultural perspective regarding bullying is a challenge (Garbarino & deLara, 2002). As demonstrated in films and television shows, contemporary culture often encourages and idolizes the victim to respond in kind to the aggressor, becoming a hero but also creating a new cycle in the bully/victim relationship; as demonstrated when the victim rises up and physically defeats a bully, as in popular adolescent films like *Back to the Future* (Zemeckis, 1985), *The Karate Kid* (Zwart, 2010), or even in comic blockbusters like *Avengers: Infinity War* (Russo & Russo, 2018) and *Deadpool 2* (Leitch, 2018). Huggins (2016) and Sheehan (2015) state that it is time to redefine and create a response to bullying, in adolescents, that not only illustrates the gravity of the circumstances of bullying but also maintains and acknowledges the human dignity of both the victim and aggressor, apart from the actions of the individuals. An alternative response should not focus on either side of a bully/victim argument but focus on a deeper unification of the whole of humanity. The roots for an alternative response to the bully-victim relationship is illustrated by Merton:

The nonviolent resister is not fighting simply for “his” truth or for “his” pure conscious, or for the right that is on “his side.” On the contrary, both his strength and his weakness come from the fact that he is fighting for *the* [sic] truth, common to him and to the

adversary, *the* [sic] right which is objective and universal. He is fighting for *everybody* [sic]. (Merton, 1967/1980, p. 209)

Merton's view of humanity offers a sobering desire for unity, not focusing on one side or another, but universal human dignity. Sheehan (2015) states that current responses to bullying remain inconsistent across age groups and cultures, and although students have shown growth in knowledge and attitudes about aggression, significant change in behavior has not often occurred in practice. Leonard (2014) indicates that current anti-bullying responses are ineffective because they do not address the problem at the core. The writings of Thomas Merton offer an innovative perspective, as a response to violence, such as bullying. Merton stated that, instead of focusing on the difference in behavior, of who is right and who is wrong, unity ought to be the primary focus:

Christian nonviolence is not built on a presupposed division, but on the basic unity of man. It is not out for the conversion of the wicked to the ideas of the good, but for the healing and reconciliation of man with himself, man the person, and man the human family. (Merton, 1995a, p. 249)

Here Merton acknowledges that the common unit of measure that one should consider when acting is the dignity of the human person, the dignity found in the person of the victim and the dignity in the person of the bully. The heart of the bully and victim relationship is a holistic problem surrounding the dignity and worth of the individuals. Leonard (2014) states that the two common characteristics of a bullying are that: a bully lacks empathy and a bully is unable to take responsibility for their actions, or show remorse. Huggins (2016) indicates that the lack of empathy and responsibility is seeded in the fact that bullying is based on the creation of a stigma; that by some aspect a victim is seen as of less value in relationship to the norm, or what the bully



has deemed normal. The view of separation and isolation allows the bully to disconnect from the victim because of the differentness of the victim. Through this separation the bully does not feel it is necessary to assess the needs, rights, or worth of the victim, but the victim is seen merely an object, a utility that can be used by force for the pleasure or gratification of the bully (Wiseman, 2009). Merton's writings challenge that the relationships between all human beings should be viewed through a new perspective of compassion and dignity (Merton, 1983; Merton, 1989; Merton, 1995a).

We have to learn to commune with ourselves before we can communicate with other men and with God. A man who is not at peace with himself necessarily projects his interior fighting into the society of those he lives with, and spreads a contagion of conflict all around him. Even when he tries to do good to others his efforts are hopeless, since he does not know how to do good to himself. (Merton, 1983, pp. 120-121).

Merton affirms that an individual's actions does not just affect individual persons but affects the community as a whole. Bullying actions do not just affect the bully and the victim but have an effect on the whole community (Boske, 2015b; Huggins, 2016). A response to bullying behavior must affirm the dignity of the individuals involved, which indicates that the aggressor cannot be strictly vilified. It demands that both an aggressor and a victim have dignity and worth, and must be treated with dignity accordingly (Merton, 1966). Moses (2015) stated that Merton's perspective of the dignity human person directly comes from his understandings of the Christian theology of the Incarnation; where every person is to be seen, in some aspect, as Christ. The nonviolent alternative to bullying, based on the writings of Merton, would not allow the victim to be stigmatized by the bully, or the bully to become stigmatized through the consequences set down by an adult social expectation. The need to shift the view from a consequence-based

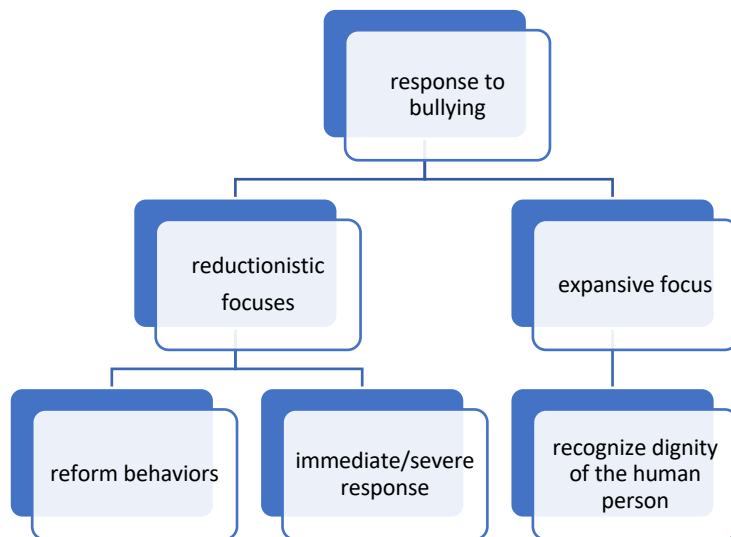
response to a view of charity is needed to stop the cycle of labeling and ostracizing victims and bullies alike: “true solidarity is destroyed by the political art of pitting one man against another and the commercial art of estimating all men at a price” (Merton, 1964b/1966, p. 157). Merton asserts to find true solidarity divisions and labels must cease, and the worth of all human beings must be acknowledged. Merton’s writings offer a new lens to view the dignity of the human person beyond just mere tolerance, but charity as equals. It is Merton’s view on the worth and dignity of all human beings that will become the innovative approach, and anchor, for the curriculum to respond to adolescent bullying in Catholic schools. Adolescents must first acknowledge that the aggressor is not whole (Sheehan, 2015). A response to bullying behavior that would have lasting change for adolescents needs to consider acceptance and empathy for all involved, of the victim’s suffering while not trivializing or vilifying the aggressor’s actions (Huggins, 2016). Bullying behavior is not merely an action interpreted subjectively but affects the relationship with others in a community and challenges the very core of human nature (Merton, 1980b; Sheehan, 2015).

A common thread found in the contributing factors of bullying, mentioned above, involves a lack of wholeness within the human person and a search to fill that void (Sax, 2007). Peer groups fill a longing for community (Dean, 2010; Kelly, 2010). When peer groups are founded on the identity of the isolation of others a lack of wholeness is filled with a feeling of acceptance, but to the detriment of excluding others (Huggins, 2016). Self-esteem and emotional challenges are a sign of the lack of recognizing or acknowledging the dignity of one’s self (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Sax, 2007). Abuse and humiliation are similar to self-esteem and emotional challenges but come from an external source that erodes the view of one’s dignity and worth (Wiseman, 2009; Turley, 2015). Sax (2007) as well as Shaffer and Gordon (2005) call

for a re-envisioning and approach of healthy views of adolescents and their expectations in relationships.

Figure 2.1 offers a visual summary of a comparison of the reductionistic and expansive responses to bullying. As illustrated in Figure 2.1 the reductionistic responses to bullying focus on stopping or changing a behavior in the student, often leaving a stigma or label on the victim and bully, while an expansive response is open to the recognition of the dignity of the human person.

**Figure 2.1 Contrast of reductionistic and expansive responses to bullying**



*Figure 2.1. Note: The expansive focus acknowledges the complex factors that influence the life factors of the dignity of the individuals involved in contrast to simple, standardized responses to bullying.*

The next section of this literature review will focus on adolescent spirituality. This section will offer a brief overview of the three commonly recognized aspects of adolescent spirituality: a) self-discovery, b) passion, and c) advocacy (Dean, 2010; Marcia et. al, 1993; Rice et. al, 2017). Secondly, this section will illustrate how Thomas Merton’s life and writings embody these three aspects consistent with adolescent spirituality.

## **Adolescent spirituality**

Adolescents are often pigeon-holed and labeled through cultural stereotypes by the myriad of social groups that influence and surround them as they search for their identity and meaning (Dean, 2010; Loughrey, 2013; Malewitz, 2013). While a holistic development of one's identity leads to maturity as a whole person, a poor and distorted self-identity and over-dependence of others becomes a catalyst of personal isolation and behaviors that lead to the exclusion of others, such as bullying or clique identities (Garbarino & deLara, 2002; Huggins, 2016; Wiseman, 2009). On the journey of maturation there are difficult moments that arise which challenge an adolescent to change, or evolve, from a previous belief or tradition to a new perspective (Marcia et al., 1993; Rohr & Martos, 2005). Challenges can arise in negotiating the value and worth of a previous tradition by an adolescent negotiating the world when maturing from a perspective of child to a perspective of an adult (Giussani, 2001). A sense of independence and individuality can lead to isolation in an adolescent, especially in situations where an individual may engage in divergent points of view from a previously held tradition, and individuals that held a previous authoritative role in the life of the youth (Huggins, 2016; Wiseman, 2009).

To address the holistic aspect of the adolescent, it is important to discuss the spiritual component of an adolescent. Dean (2004) stated that adolescent spirituality can be summarized by three aspects common to the maturation stage of adolescence: self-discovery, passion, and advocacy. Engebretson (2006) similarly indicated that there are four main components of adolescent spirituality: the experience of the sacred other; connectedness with self, others, and the world; illumination of a lived experience with meaning and value; and the need for expression in traditional and non-traditional ways. These aspects of self-discovery, or lived

experience, fuel the adolescent's ambitions and offer meaning to the adolescent in this stage of life, which ultimately manifests in an advocacy or drive in an adolescent for a particular passion or purpose (Canales, 2011; Dean, 2004).

**Thomas Merton: An exemplar.** Merton's writings on nonviolent resistance and the ethic of the dignity of the human person (Merton, 1979; Merton, 1980b; Merton, 1989) can create a foundation for a response to bullying, but the spiritual writing of Thomas Merton is not easily distilled for an adolescent audience. As a Trappist monk, Merton had very little direct contact with adolescents or adolescent matters, but the most comprehensive view of Merton's experience with a young person, and interaction with adolescent issues, was his correspondence with Suzanne Butorovich (Merton, 1989; The Merton Center, 2018a). As a sixteen-year-old high school student, Ms. Butorovich began exchanging letters with Merton by soliciting him for a contribution to her underground school newspaper in June 1967 (Atkinson, 2013; Merton, 1989). The Merton Center (2018a) has cataloged twenty-three letters written by Merton to Suzanne between 1967 and Merton's death, in 1968. Throughout their correspondence Merton showed compassion and respect toward Ms. Butorovich's inquiries and answered her questions as an interested friend (Merton, 1989). Merton's responses in the letters indicated that he regarded her as an equal in spirit (Atkinson, 2015; Merton, 1989). The people and events important to her, such as the death of the Beatles' manager Brian Epstein, lyrics of Bob Dylan, and music of Jefferson Airplane, were treated with sincerity and respect by Merton, and he offered his insight and spiritual perspective of his concerns (Atkinson, 2013; Merton, 1989, pp. 308-312). Merton also sent copies of his own poetry and reflections for her critique, as a respected equal (Atkinson, 2013). This mutuality in relationship offered insight of a deeper spirituality that exists in the lives of adolescents that Merton directly recognized and indicated through his correspondence.

Although Thomas Merton had limited exposure to adolescents throughout his adult life his approach to self-discovery and desire for a holistic unity in the individual and community continues to speak to the challenges of contemporary adolescents (Loughrey, 2013; Pramuk, 2002). Dean (2010) and Quinn (2018) state that adolescents are in a stage of life where they struggle for identity in the midst of intimacy and passion, acceptance, self-discovery, and advocacy. The following significant events throughout Merton's life illustrate experiences that relate to contemporary adolescents: (a) self-discovery, and a search for acceptance; (b) passion, and a search for intimacy; and (c) advocacy, and a search for social justice.

***Self-discovery, and a search for acceptance.*** Canales (2011) and Rohr and Martos (2005) assert that self-discovery is an essential component associated with adolescence. Quinn (2018) also discusses this nature of self-discovery in regard to adolescence, but uses the term purposeful explorer to describe the drive within an adolescent to search for their authenticity within and without of group ideology. Thomas Merton's spirituality can be considered that of a perpetual seeker (Padovano, 1995). His writings continually search for a deeper, more authentic, meaning of the self and relationship with God and community (Carr, 1988; Merton, 1983; Merton, 2007). Merton's writings are concerned with pursuing and living authentically, as God created (Letayf, 2015; Martin, 2006; Merton 1983; Pramuk, 2002). To live authentically, one must search for wholeness in body, mind, and spirit.

In *Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton recalled that although his father was Anglican and his mother was Quaker, they did not practice their faith nor did they impose religious beliefs upon their children, allowing them to choose as they became older (Merton, 1999). Although this originally hindered Merton's search for his true-self, in relationship with God, during his college years at Columbia Merton he began to follow a call to deeper self-discovery. From his earliest

memories, Merton recalled that he was destined to live a life of individuality and self-discovery: “Mother wanted me to be independent, and not to run with the herd. I was to be original, individual, I was to have a definite character and ideals of my own” (Merton, 1999, p. 12). Already at a young age Merton recognized that his life was to be different than the norm and to sustain such an identity in the world that attempts to conform people and ideas great passion would be required.

Merton searched for authenticity through exploration with Eastern spirituality, Communism, philosophy, and ultimately was drawn to Catholicism, which he grew up having an aversion toward (Merton, 1999). An illustration of this deep-seeded prejudice of Catholicism was shown when Merton had purchased a book entitled *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*. His reaction to seeing an imprimatur, the Catholic statement of approval of a text, left him with a feeling of disgust and of being deceived: “They should have warned me that it was a Catholic book! Then I would never have bought it” (Merton, 1999, pp. 188). The moment of purchasing and reading this text, along with researching and reading Gerard Manley Hopkins, created a new avenue of self-discovery in Merton that awoke a passionate desire toward Catholicism. In June 1938, when spiritually seeking guidance Merton received the passionate advice from the famous and revered Hindu scholar, Mahanambata Brahmachari, to read the spiritual texts St. Augustine’s *Confessions* and Thomas a Kempis’ *The Imitation of Christ* (Croghan, 2018; Merton, 1999, pp. 216-7).

As Merton wrote and commented on spirituality, he continued to mature in self-discovery, reflecting about this difference later in his life (Carr, 1988; McDonnell, 1967). One constant perspective that Merton held for authentic self-discovery was the nature of relationship

with others. Merton stated that true freedom and authenticity of the self is only found in relationship with others:

I do not find in myself the power to be happy merely by doing what I like. On the contrary, if I do nothing except what pleases my own fancy I will be miserable almost all of the time. This would never be so if my will had not been created to use its freedom in the life of others (Merton, 1983, p. 25)

Merton asserted that authentic self-discovery is found in relationship not isolation because human beings are naturally communal creatures and that the happiness of an individual is bound to the happiness of others.

***Passion, and a search for intimacy.*** Dean (2004) asserts that the adolescent stage of life can also be described well as a state of passion. Thomas Merton engaged in passion toward all aspects of his life, his vocation, the depth of his knowledge, the furor of his writings, and his relationships with others (Merton, 1980a; Peach, 2014; Waldron, 2012; Zuercher, 2014).

After the death of his father, Merton went to America to visit his grandparents and brother, John Paul. On this trip, searching for intimacy, Merton (1999) wrote that he planned to meet a beautiful girl and fall in love. Merton did meet a woman on the voyage and fell head over heels in love. Although only sixteen he admitted that the woman he fell in love with was likely twice his age (Merton, 1999). Toward the end of the voyage, as the ship arrived in Nantucket, Merton admitted to declaring his undying love for her. The rejection he received, although compassionate, depressed him emotionally throughout his summer in America (Merton, 1999). Merton's passions could often overwhelm him as he sought intimacy. During his freshmen year at Clare College, Cambridge, Merton started experimenting and led a life full of passion in excessive drinking and carousing:



I began to get all the books of Freud and Jung and Adler out of the big redecorated library of the Union and to study, with all the patience and application which my hangovers allowed me, the mysteries of sex-repression and complexities and introversions and extroversions and all the rest. I, whose chief trouble was that my soul and all its faculties were going to seed because there was nothing to control my appetites... came to the conclusion that the cause of all my unhappiness was sex-repression! (Merton, 1999, p.137)

As indicated above Merton was passionately searching for intimacy. Merton continued to illustrate his passionate nature throughout his poetry, most especially in *Eighteen Poems* (Merton, 1980a; Waldron, 2012; Zuercher, 2014). The eighteen love poems are infused with passion, desire, and intensity that offer insight into the full force of nature that defined Merton's life (Waldron, 2012).

Merton also exhibited passion throughout other aspects of his life. Throughout several periods of acedia, restlessness, Merton planned to relocate from Gethsemani to other monasteries. In a series of correspondences, Grayston (2015) recounted that Merton passionately developed plans to move to a monastery in Camaldoli, Italy, in 1952; ironically, the same location mentioned in *The Seven Storey Mountain* that Merton was reading about when he experienced a deep vocational call to monastic life in 1941 (Merton, 1999). In 1960, Merton attempted to relocate to Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Lipsey (2015) recounted the passionate and tenuous relationship that Merton had with his abbot at Gethsemani, James Fox, regarding such thoughts and desires. Drawing on the journals of Merton, Lipsey (2015) illustrated that in his thoughts Merton passionately challenged the preferences of his superior, James Fox:

If I had to explain now to Dom James that I wanted to leave to go to Mexico - what on earth would I be able to say? I would be tongued tied. The things I could never say: I hate pontifical masses. I hate your idea of the liturgy - it seems to me to be a false, dead, repetition of words and gestures without spontaneity, without sincerity. You like to sing hymns because the melodies delight you. I can think of better ways which to waste your time... I would say this and many other things, all adding up to one: our life here is too much of a lie. If that is really the case, then, since I can't do anything about it, I had better leave. But always the question remains: perhaps it is I who am the liar and perhaps leaving would be the greater lie. (Merton, 1997/2015, p. 122)

Merton's contempt for wasting time, his time and that of his abbot, comes full force here.

Throughout his journals, passages like these indicate, as is demonstrated in his journals, Merton vacillated with great turmoil on his decisions but was always remained passionate about his thoughts and actions.

Merton's passion is also noticed in his journals during his Asian excursion toward the end of his life:

I had my audience with the Dalai Lama this morning in his new quarters. It was a bright, sunny day - blue sky, the mountains absolutely clear... The Dalai Lama is most impressive as a person. He is strong and alert, bigger than I expected (for some reason I thought he would be small). A very solid, energetic, generous, and warm person, very capable trying to handle enormous problems - none of which he mentioned directly (Merton, 1975, pp. 100-01).

Merton's frank tone subtly displays his passion of meeting the revered spiritual leader. His use of the extreme adjectives such as "most impressive" are phrases usually reserved in his

vocabulary for individuals that have formed or monumentally change his life, such as Mark van Doren: “who is this excellent man Van Doren...?” (Merton, 1999, p. 154). In his life and use of language, Thomas Merton was, in a truest sense of the term, an embodiment of passion (Peach, 2014; Waldron, 2012).

*Advocacy, and a search for social justice.* Dean (2004) stated that adolescents are led to action through their passions, and desire to be involved in change and issues of advocacy. One recent example of adolescents illustrating their desire to be advocates would be the student movement, school walkout demonstration and March for our Lives, of early 2018, as a response to the school shooting in Parkland, Florida (Correal et al., 2018). The legacy of Merton is one of advocacy (Crompton, 2004). The writings Merton’s raised awareness of the dangers of war, poverty, social injustice, the removal of God, and isolation:

This crazy belief in people who are absolutely good and people who are absolutely bad (the stock in trade of totalitarian society) is inseparable from lack of belief in God, and to me the frightful outcry, scandal, pious horror, and generally unrealistic attitude people have taken toward the case, is simply characteristic of a country that knows nothing of God. (Merton, 1959)

Merton stated that life is much more complex than merely a system of black and white, wrong actions and right actions. Merton’s response to violence and desire for unity in heart, mind, and community found in his writings endure as his long-lasting legacy as a spiritual writer (Morris-Young, 2015). Merton commented on social activism of the Civil Rights Movement. Through writing letters, poems, and short essays, Merton offered spiritual insight on world events involving war and examining cultural racism (Merton, 1980a; Merton 1989). Some of his most famous and poignant writings of advocacy and challenge include topics on nuclear war and the

effects of the bombs on the minds of hearts of the world (Merton, 1962), reflections on the life and sanity of the actions of Nazi S.S. Lieutenant-colonel Adolf Eichmann (Merton, 1964a/1966), and the collected correspondence of Merton throughout times of crisis (Merton, 1994). One such letter written by Merton from April 1964, acknowledged the need and cost of living and writing as a Catholic advocate:

The writer who has “influence” on the people who really need to read him must have something important to say, and something that is important *now* [sic] or perhaps tomorrow, later than now. And he must want to say it to the men of his time, perhaps even to others later. But it must be a bit desperate if it is going to get out at all. And if it is desperate, it will be opposed. Hence no writer who has anything important to say can avoid being opposed or criticized. Thus the writer who wants to-let us say reach, or help rather than influence people-must suffer for the truth of his witness and for love of the people he is reaching. Otherwise his communion with them is shallow and without life. The real writer lives in deep communion with his readers, because they share in common sufferings and desires and needs that are *urgent* [sic]. (Merton, 1994, p. 167)

Here Merton indicated that these three longings, self-discovery, passion, and advocacy are bound together within deep communion with others.

The legacy of Merton cannot be separated from his passion, search for the authentic-self, and advocacy of the dignity of the human person through advocacy of social justice. These three qualities, passion, the authentic-self, and advocacy are three aspects common to the lived experience of the adolescent stage of life (Dean, 2004; Dean, 2010). Merton’s life, through his writings, offered a common experience to the challenges and searching nature of an adolescent (Loughrey, 2013; Pramuk, 2002).

**The culture of adolescence.** Over the past two decades, American culture has changed significantly, especially regarding cultural expectations and trends of adolescents and youth (Sax, 2007; Sax, 2010). The technological boom has changed the face of communication, commerce, literacy, careers, education, and entertainment (Bauerlein, 2011; Carr, 2011; Greenfield, 2015; Wolfe, 2010). In 1993, the Internet supplied roughly 1% of all information used for telecommunications purposes, but by 2008, 97% of telecommunicated information was carried through the Internet (Hilbert & Lopez, 2011); contemporary adolescents have experienced a world that has always been wireless. The standard form of communication between adolescents has migrated from the telephone to text messaging. The Internet has evolved social networking between friends, family, and strangers through sites like MySpace, Facebook, and the ability to share short messages and video clips through Snap Chat, Twitter or Instagram (Hoffman, 2011). Many adolescent social media users judge their worth, and popularity, based on the amount of online friends, likes, and comments they receive from a particular posting (Tosun, 2012). Some scholars state that such trends that define popularity are developing narcissistic tendencies in this generation of youth, and promote lack of engagement from real life and addictive tendencies to virtual space (Bauerlein, 2011; Rosen, 2011; Sax, 2007).

In 2003, the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) began to collect data on adolescent spirituality, ritual practices, and attitudes toward religion throughout America. The data from this study was collected through interviews with adolescents regarding their views of Christianity. The survey questions focused specifically on the role and importance that religion, ritual practices, and personal beliefs played upon their lives. The primary view espoused by adolescents that emerged from the NSYR data was summarized as Moral Therapeutic Deism (Smith & Denton, 2005). Moral Therapeutic Deism is a moral outlook that focuses on feeling

good, exemplified by acting nice, and remaining at a distance with God until something important in one's life is required (Dean, 2010; Smith & Denton, 2005). Moral Therapeutic Deism is exemplified on focusing more on the desires of one's individual feelings and preferences than the personal need for community and relationship, for God or others, and can often value the worth of others merely as utilitarian relationships. The common acceptance of the tenets of Moral Therapeutic Deism in adolescents can offer insight into spiritual factors and contributors to the objectification of others based on the utility of their relationships (Huggins, 2016). Through her research of the NSYR, Dean (2010) indicated that American adolescents commonly believe that religion is a good thing but they often very rarely engage such beliefs in their daily lives. Adolescents primarily believe that if an individual is good, one will have a happy life now and in the afterlife. Canales (2011) and Mercadante (2012) evolve the work of Dean (2004; 2010) but narrow their focus of research primarily upon Catholic adolescents. Canales (2011) indicated similar conclusions, that Catholic adolescent spirituality is primarily described as secularized with occasionally intertwined religious rituals.

In *Renewing the Vision* (1997), the USCCB offered a comprehensive framework to help guide and allow Catholic adolescents to mature physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Christian maturity is the conversion process through which individuals progress toward living more fully and grows closer to their true vocation or 'call' through developing their spirituality (Martin, 2006). Unlike physical or intellectual development, Christian maturity does not necessarily come naturally because of the influence of a secular world and its focus on material satisfactions (Canales, 2011). Offering opportunities for adolescents to grow, be creative, use their talents, and learn leadership skills is essential to establish the foundations for full, active, conscious, and participative adults (Canales, 2011; Mercadante, 2012). Although it

is important to remember that adolescents are still in search of their identity and preferences, without the opportunity to learn, test, risk, and grow in the comfort of a family community, like the Church, they will search elsewhere for the sense of community (Malewitz, 2013). Canales (2011) and Mercadante (2012) indicate it is important to offer real-life exemplars for adolescents can learn from to challenge a self-centered perspective and foster more engagement with the community. Thomas Merton can offer such an insight as a real-life exemplar through the experiences of authentic self-discovery, passion, and advocacy found throughout his themes and writings (O'Hare, 2018).

**Negotiating authenticity.** Self-discovery is an essential part of adolescent spirituality (Canales, 2011; Dean, 2004; Quinn, 2018). The interaction between one's self-identity and relationship with others is based on a multi-faceted and complex web of interactions and reactions that adolescents negotiate (Sax 2007; Sax, 2010; Wiseman, 2009). Adolescents desire to seek out relationships that bring the best out of their person, while being accepted and recognized for who they authentically are (Dean, 2010; Quinn, 2018). Self-contemplation and reflection of relationships is a paramount starting point if an adolescent is to being to truly know who they are (O'Hare, 2018; Rohr & Martos, 2005). Through learning about personal preferences an individual comes to know who they are and their purpose with much more clarity. As one matures, Giussani (2001) indicates that the education process ought to evolve into a dialogue between teacher and student. This manner of education allows the student to negotiate through the positive attributes of crisis and criticism and develops respect for one's gifts and life goals. Genuine dialogue compliments this process through the comparison between the individual and others, authentically listening and contributing to their community (Simmer-Brown, 2014). This is not a description of merely a conversation but a way of life. It is a community at heart. To

grow and thrive one must engage, receive, be aware of others, and their own needs. This type of community demands compromise through charity.

Nevertheless, it is through such intellectual processes that adolescents can experience conversion, and spiritual maturity can begin to find its roots (Canales, 2011). As adolescents mature, it is more often the case that their likes and interests begin to bloom in unexpected avenues, but this does not guarantee that they will find a deeper faith. Erikson (1993) stated that adolescents negotiate a 'trust vs. mistrust' stage which establishes the basis for the foundation of an individual's emotional development. Trust and acceptance become a vital currency to an adolescent, especially in intimate and emotional relationships (Dean, 2004). It is essential for adolescents to negotiate identities and intimacy needs but not falling victim to role confusion and isolation (Erikson, 1993; Marcia et al., 1993). Faith needs to exist in a relationship to fully trust another, peer or God (Canales, 2011; Dean, 2010; Merton, 1983). Brueggemann (1979) and Giussani (2001) state that authentic faith exists in a dialogue that necessarily includes risk between both parties who give and take to establish and sustain a relationship. An adolescent must risk and trust in the midst of change and uncertainty to develop in a healthy, whole, and spiritual way.

The most significant issues for contemporary boys in adolescence is a concrete definition of masculinity and honoring the attainment of such maturity in our culture (Ong, 1981; Sax, 2007). Men are not born; they are made through being tested, brought through rituals, challenged, defined, and pushed into maturity (Rohr & Martos, 2005). Shaffer and Gordon (2005) state that several 'coming of age' rituals are present in other cultures, but clear rituals for young men seem to be lacking in contemporary America. There is no specifically male ritual or celebration to honor the ascent/assent to maturity that establishes or defines what true adult



masculinity is (Sax, 2007). Although there are rituals of passage many are often negative such as: binge drinking at 21 (or before), peer celebrations of sexual activities/conquests, gang initiations, or fraternity hazings (Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Sax, 2007). Many of the remaining positive rituals have been pressured to change by contemporary media for being antiquated or gender biased, such as the Sacraments or group identities like the Boy Scouts of America (Rohr & Martos, 2005).

Through this struggle of establishing one's identity, the adolescent references with their peers, gaining information about changes of one's self and their view of the world (Marcia et al., 1993). Along with social referencing, an adolescent may struggle to find their individual identity, or possibly even establishing life goals. This struggle for independence challenges previous expectations placed upon them by their parents or guardians, to the point of rejecting what has been taught to them in the past (Marcia et al., 1993; Ong, 1981).

**Defining passion.** The adolescent stage of life is one that can be best defined by being governed by passion (Dean, 2004; Kelly, 2010; Rohr & Martos, 2005). Passion in this definition does not just apply to the biological process and hormonal developments that occur in adolescents but the encompassing stage of life that propels all aspects of an adolescent's life: physically, intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually (Dean, 2004; Marcia et al., 1993). Passion is found throughout the drive that an adolescent may exhibit through their search for knowledge and truth, interpretation of their psychological and emotional experiences, the exhaustion of their bodies through physical activities like sports, and the drive for deep and intimate relationships with others such as sexual relationships and its ultimate expression of unity in the physical act of intercourse (Canales, 2011). Dean (2004) indicates that this passionate drive in adolescence is a primordial, deeply rooted spiritual desire that is often

misunderstood. It is often understood and expressed by adolescents through non-spiritual avenues, such as physical, emotional, and intellectual pursuits. This drive manifests in a longing for community, connectivity, and acceptance in the life and relationships of the adolescent (Canales, 2011; Merton, 1983).

The first signs of the maturity from childhood to adolescence are found through the physical and biological changes present in the individual. Biologically, the release of hormones plays a significant role in the appetites and curiosities of adolescents (Erikson, 1993; Marcia et al., 1993). These physical developments are often accompanied by changes to the physique of the individual, height and muscular changes that may be stressful and painful. Many of these physical changes manifest a change in the self-perception of the individual, self-conscious critique of appearance to others and judgment from others (Sax, 2010).

With the frontal lobe developing and the ability to think in the abstract, adolescents more firmly have the ability to empathize and sympathize with others, and desire to search for an individual to know on a deeper level of intimacy (Dean, 2004; Marcia et al., 1993). This passion of wanting to love and to be loved drives adolescents to search for acceptance of their feelings and desires. With adolescent males, this manifests into physical expressions of love, while in adolescent females the search is often in the form of an emotional expression of love and intimacy (Dean, 2004). Many adolescents will barter with either of these expressions in exchange for the other and end up feeling objectified when they feel rejected, objectified, and unsatisfied (Wiseman, 2009). It is only through being in-tune with their spiritual maturity that the sexual and physical expressions will find fulfillment and satisfaction (Merton, 1983; Rohr & Martos, 2005).

To integrate their sexuality in a healthy wholeness an individual must give enough time, thought, and energy to their sexual identity, not exceeding or repressing their needed amount (Sax, 2007; Sax, 2010). Looking at integration from this definition it is important to realize that human beings are sexual beings, but sex is not the extent of human existence. As Merton continued to sexually mature, he acknowledged the call to authenticity and holiness for himself ever clearer: “The desires of the flesh – and by that I mean not only sinful desires, but even the ordinary, normal appetites for comfort and ease and human respect, are fruitful sources of every kind of error and misjudgment” (Merton, 1999, p. 225). Here Merton exemplified that without discipline and focus an appetite can control the will, instead of the will controlling the appetite. Merton’s perspective parallels St. Paul’s ancient perspective of Christian maturity of passion and wholeness: “when I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways” (1 Cor. 13:11). Canales (2011), Dean (2010), and Marica et. al (1993) state that passion and intimacy cannot be removed from a holistic and healthy authentic adolescent maturation.

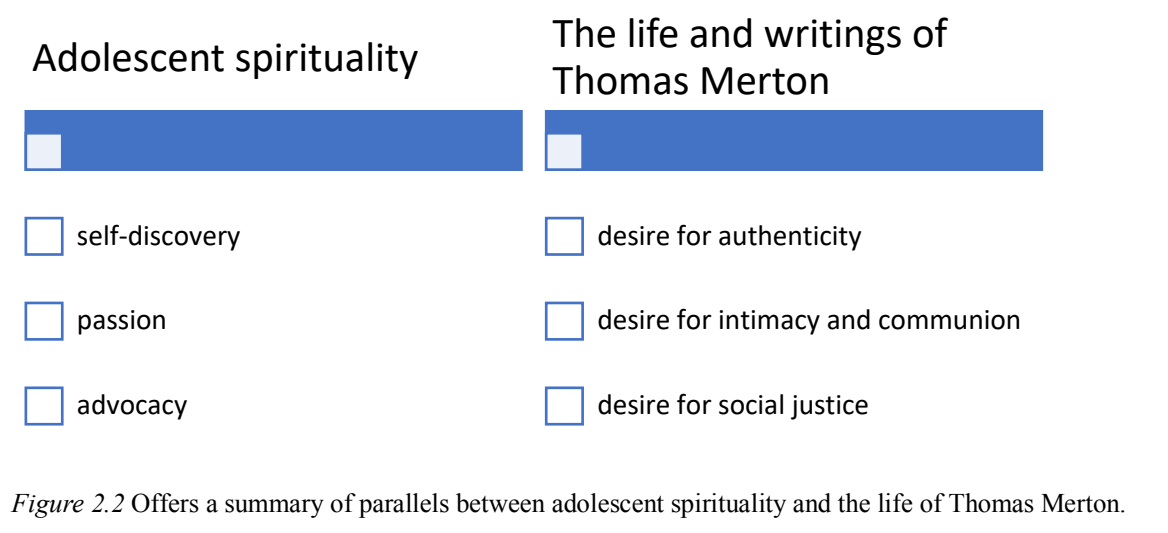
**Recognizing advocacy.** Advocacy is a third aspect at the heart of adolescent spirituality (Dean, 2004). Millennials and Generation Z are defined and changed by experiences rather than material possessions (Mercadante, 2012). A common underlying question among adolescents revolves around the meaning of their life and the purpose that their life has in the whole of creation. Adolescents often challenge the knowledge of their early educational formation and its purpose in their future throughout adolescents (Abeles & Congdon, 2009; Abeles & Rubenstein, 2015). This meaning and purpose of life for adolescents is often found and recognized through powerful personal experiences (Delgatto, 2005; Heft, 2011). The type of personal experiences that define this generation take the youth outside of their common and expected environments to

exotic experiences such as service trips, usually in areas of great poverty, local service opportunities, and retreats that focus on deeper personal reflection and expression (Heft, 2011). Adolescents desire to be involved in change and put their efforts and energy to a cause in which they believe.

Adolescent spirituality becomes the core that works in concert with healthy adolescent physical, intellectual, emotional, and psychological development as an adolescent navigates the work and culture that surrounds them (Kelly, 2010; Rohr & Martos, 2005). As adolescents learn from experience they mature in self-discovery, through passion, and action in advocacy for those beliefs and causes that move them (Malewitz, 2013). Loughrey (2013) indicated that it is in the moments of questioning and seeking that adolescents can learn most from the writings of Thomas Merton. It is through the questioning and probing that the adolescent begins to truly know their authentic-self and have the opportunity to test and measure their passions and discover their self and relationship with their neighbor.

Figure 2.2 offers a visual representation of the common aspects of adolescent spirituality (Dean, 2010) and the themes in the life and writings of Thomas Merton.

**Figure 2.2 Comparison of adolescent spirituality and the life of Merton**



The next section of this literature review will focus on Catholic education. This section will offer a brief overview of the goals of Catholic education as well as brief insight into its governance of curriculum and assessment. Secondly, this section will shed light on Thomas Merton’s beliefs on Catholic education and how his writings mirrored good Catholic educational praxis.

### **Catholic Education**

Education is the process from which an individual learns and matures throughout life. Topping (2015b) stated that “education is not a thing. It is a method” (p. 8). Education understood as a method is a process to shape and form a human being, as a whole (Giussani, 2001; Merton, 1969/1979). Through youth and young adulthood effective instruction becomes the touchstone that a student acquires to develop needed skills that lay a foundational for adulthood (Marzano, 2007). In the Catholic tradition, education serves as a unique process that not only prepares a student in topical information that guides their cognitive knowledge base but also imbues a spiritual component that guides a student in faith and spiritual maturity (Baumbach, 2017; Del Prete, 1990). In response to an inquiry regarding his philosophy of

education Merton wrote: “I believe education means more than just imparting ‘knowledge.’ It means the formation of the whole person” (Merton, 1989, p. 364). Pope Francis remarks that formation of the whole person is an essential part of education for our contemporary times to face challenges of an information-saturated society: “We are living in an information-driven society which bombards us indiscriminately with data – all treated as being of equal importance – and which leads to remarkable superficiality in the area of moral discernment” (Francis, 2013, #64). It is not the amount of information that a student receives which defines their education, but rather how and why the student uses the information in their formation and maturation.

This type of formational education acknowledges, and demands, a process to assist in a healthy maturation of the whole person: physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual (Convey & Thompson, 1999; Giussani, 2001; Groome, 1998). This spiritual component serves as a driving force in relationship and connection with the transcendent nature of the student, namely their soul. Catholic education strives to bring the student to a deeper understanding of their nature, relationship with the world, others, and relationship with God (Groome, 1998; *National directory for catechesis*, 2003).

**Merton and Catholic education.** Thomas Merton is not primarily remembered as an educator. Throughout his life though, Merton had multiple experiences as well as monastic occupations that could directly fall under a pedagogical label, as well as the numerous writings and correspondence that evolved into teacher/mentor relationship (Merton, 1989; Merton 1994; Merton, 2007). Some of the traditional instructional experiences of Merton would be teaching a fall semester extension course in English composition at Columbia in 1939, and teaching English courses at St. Bonaventure’s College from the fall semester of 1940 to December 1941, when he left to enter the Abbey of Gethsemani (Crompton, 2004; Horan, 2014a; Merton, 1999). After

entering the monastery, Merton held the educational roles of master of scholastics from 1951-1955, where he was in charge of the formation of the students studying to become priests, as well as master of novices, from 1955-1965, where he was in charge of the formation of men entering monastic life (Aprile, 1998; Del Prete, 1990; The Merton Center, 2018b).

Although his perspectives may have evolved throughout his life, Merton indicated his preference and profound belief of the importance of Catholic education in *The Seven Storey Mountain*:

I am overwhelmed at the thought of the tremendous weight of moral responsibility that Catholic parents accumulate upon their shoulders by not sending their children to Catholic schools. (Merton, 1999, pp. 56)

Merton indicated that the importance of the formal process of Catholic education plays as an integral moral component that promotes and sustains Catholic tradition outside of the family unit. Although not practicing religious beliefs in his youth, Merton recalls the difference in attitude between the Catholic students of St. Antonin, who exuded simplicity and affability in comparison to the bullying students of Lycée, where he was schooled (Merton, 1999). Merton also recalled a charitableness in the nephew of the Privats (a Catholic family Merton and his father boarded with in Murat, France) (Merton, 1999). In *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton's use of language portrays a positive bias toward Catholic education by applying only positive attributes throughout the recollections of his youth in the actions and behaviors of children who were schooled in Catholic educational settings, in comparison to the schoolboys of his school or his own behavior during his youth (Merton, 1999). His positive bias toward Catholic education may have cooled toward the end of his life, though that is unclear. In a response to Ms. Butorovich, dated July 1967, Merton wrote: "If I had to rewrite *Seven Storey Mountain*. I'd cut

out a lot of the sermons I guess, including the sales pitch for Catholic schools and that” (Merton, 1989, p. 310). Merton does not elaborate further why he felt differently about those passages regarding Catholic schooling, but clearly his perspective and fervent advocacy for Catholic schools had changed since first writing his autobiography.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the tenets that define Catholic education were deeply important to Merton. His spiritual maturation in Catholicism paralleled the expectations of Catholic education: the learning of doctrinal truths, engaging the liturgy, learning from the heroes of the faith, and developing an ethical order of moral living within the lens of Catholic tradition. Through his continuous reading of Catholic authors and saints during his time at Columbia and St. Bonaventure, as well as following the lives and examples of holy people such as contemporary figures of his time like Therese of Lisieux, Fr. Damian Molokai, and John Bosco, Merton grew in knowledge and passion of the Catholic faith and was filled with a desire of advocacy in action (Merton, 1995b; Merton, 1999). After his decision to become Catholic, *The Seven Storey Mountain* narrative highlights his frequent attendance and participation, as well as emotional experiences at liturgical rites of the Church. Merton also often directly connects significant events of his life and the corresponding Feast days and Solemnities of the Church year as if there was a divine connection between his life and the martyrology and liturgical year (Merton, 1999).

It is also important to note Merton’s friendship and experience with the Catholic Philosophy professor, Dan Walsh. Like his admiration of Mark Van Doren, Merton commented that Dan Walsh was an excellent educator and friend: “Dan Walsh turned out to be another one of those destined in a providential way to shape and direct my vocation. For it was he who pointed out my way to the place where I know am” (Merton, 1999, pp. 239-240). In *Seven Storey*



*Mountain*, Merton attributed traits to Walsh of what he thought a Catholic educator ought to possess: an expansive view of Catholic thought throughout the centuries without “narrowing and restricting Catholic philosophy and theology to a single school, to a single attitude, a single system” (Merton, 1999, p. 241). This holistic perspective of the learning and appreciating the breadth and depth of Christianity is still recognized as an essential component for authentic and rich Catholic educational praxis (Barron, 2012; *Living as missionary disciples: National directory for catechesis worksheets*, 2017). Although Merton did not receive a formal Catholic education, in a traditional sense of Catholic schooling, he would stress the essential importance of the experiences that formed his faith, which also comprise authentic, rich Catholic pedagogy, namely: vast reading of Catholic literature, frequent prayer, devotion and liturgical experiences, and a pulse on the life of advocacy of the Christian life of evangelization and mission.

**Defining Catholic education.** Catholic education is comprised of theory and practice, which could also be stated as: (a) catechesis and (b) formation (Topping, 2015b). These two aspects, intellectual and spiritual maturation are woven together to create an organic system for transformation in the student-learner (Shimabukuro, 2007). Catechesis refers to a systematic way of educating a learner in Catholic doctrine, the functions, purpose, and definitions that establish the fullness of the Catholic tradition and its expression - the intellectual maturation (Baumbach, 2017). The formation aspect of Catholic education refers to the interpretation, desire, reflection, and internal dialogue of the individual to grow closer to the ministry and mission of Jesus of Nazareth - the spiritual maturation. The purpose of Catholic education should create a setting for a student to transform through experience, method, and knowledge to seek the ultimate good: happiness with God (Topping, 2015b). This understanding of happiness is beyond emotional desire but derives from the Aristotelian concept of *telos*, one’s ultimate goal

or purpose (Pojman, 1998). The *National Directory of Catechesis* (2005) further distinguished the two educational components into: divine pedagogy and human methodology: where divine pedagogy refers to formation through understanding and living the teachings of Divine Revelation, and human methodology as the intellectual development through various human languages, cultures, and experiences that bring together content and method to engage and dialogue with faith.

**Roots of Catholic education.** The roots of Catholic education stem from the Great Commission mentioned in the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew, where after the resurrection Jesus of Nazareth entrusts the continuation of the mission of ritual initiation and instruction to his Apostles (Baumbach, 2017; Mt. 28:19-20; Topping, 2015b). This mission continues today, although the instructional process has become much more structured and governed than its ancient roots. Catechesis remains the act of handing on the Word of God intended to inform the faith community and candidates for initiation into the Church about the teachings of Christ transmitted by the Apostles (Baumbach, 2017; McKinney, 2011). Catholic education also involves the lifelong effort of forming people into witnesses of Christ and opening their hearts to the spiritual transformation given by the Holy Spirit (*Renewing our commitment to Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the third millennium*, 2005). The current standards for religious education and formative curriculum for Catholic adolescents were composed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). This curriculum offers a catechetical and formational introduction to a collection of doctrinal elements for adolescents: vocabulary, as well as the incorporation of prayers and ritual experiences, and moral and ethical theory based on the guidelines established by the USCCB (*Doctrinal elements of a curriculum framework for the development of catechetical materials for young people of high school age*, 2008).

The purpose and goal of contemporary Catholic moral education could be best understood through Thomas Aquinas' use of Aristotle virtue ethics, which explains that a human being is made to mature toward unity with the *telos* (Topping, 2015b). This *telos* can only be attained through happiness, not strictly pleasure or happiness that exists of strictly the material world but within the choice of one's action toward a transcendent or nobler goal (Cahn, 2012; Topping, 2015b). Aristotle stated that one is not truly happy until that individual lives within a virtuous character; a character that needs to be learned and practiced from the example of other virtuous individuals, chosen freely by the individual, and conducted through temperance (Cahn, 2012). *Telos* understood through a Christian perspective would be understood as unity with God (Topping, 2015b). The goal of Catholic education is to help a student in their journey to attain their ultimate happiness, wholeness and unity with God (Baumbach, 2017; McKinney, 2011). It is essential then for Catholic education to faithfully catechize and form a student through a curriculum that needs to be woven together for the student to develop all aspects of the human person: body, mind, and spirit (Baumbach, 2017; Convey & Thompson, 1999; Del Prete, 1990).

Giussani (2006) stated that the body, mind, and spiritual development of a student has different needs within their maturation and education. As a student matures, the education process ought to evolve into a dialogue between teacher and student, from basic physical facts to a dialogue of the mind, and ultimately a communion of spirit (Del Prete, 2010; Giussani, 2001; Moore, 2007). Effective Catholic education needs to be framed within a meaningful process of experiential verification and formation that will prompt the student to engage in healthy activities not because of duty, but their own initiative (Peterson, 2009; Robinson, 2011). The risk of education and maturation is that a student is given the freedom to choose their own particular path or action. This progresses beyond a calculable principle but resides in a healthy balance of

the need of the individual and the need of the community. “To educate means to help the human soul enter into the totality of the real” (Giussani, 2001, pp. 105). It is only through real experiences that individuals exist in community together, and ultimately sheds light into the pinnacle example of community, the Trinity.

The education of the whole human person is at the core of Catholic education (McKinney, 2011). As mentioned previously, an individual learns to grow and thrive through the assistance and participation in community; likewise, the body grows as a whole not independently of other aspects of the body. That continuity of maturation is an essential element in being able to negotiate and engage the various challenges that affect one in life experiences (Peterson, 2009). The dynamics of community and individual connectivity in the Church has been a focus of the earliest written Christian documents (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 1:15-23). An individual is born in existence from, and formed in the midst of, community (Merton, 1983; Giussani, 2006; Groome, 1998). To develop and flourish, an individual matures and come to realize their full potential within a community and contributes to the community through offering their talents for the needs of society (Conger, Williams, Little, Masyn, & Shebloski, 2009). Before an individual understands their existence or responsibility in such a community, they are subject to a process of formation into a particular style of life through their education (Giussani, 2001). This journey is not one that only consists of gaining knowledge, but the individual must allow that knowledge to influence their life and actions. Thus, education cannot be impartial or valueless, but it depends upon dialoguing with authentic truths of experiential reality and humanity to lead a life of action and not a frozen passivity from fear and indecision (Francis, 2014; Madden, 2006).

**Assessment of Catholic education.** To effectively ensure the education of adolescents in Catholic catechesis and formative engagement of faith institutions have been established

curriculum standards and assessments (Convey & Thompson, 1999). Some of the challenges associated with implementing a rigorous religious education curriculum lay in the fact that such course material is based on a two-fold nature, cognitive and formative (Convey, 2010; Topping, 2015a). Facts and vocabulary terms are taught so that the students will grow in their faith as they develop cognitively. To assess such a system the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) established an assessment that contains questions to assess cognitive and formative elements (Convey & Thompson, 1999; Convey, 2010). The NCEA ACRE (2001) was developed as an assessment based on content specific questions from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and tradition and dogmatic beliefs in Catholicism, as well as questions regarding faith, belief, and attitudes for an assessment of both cognitive and formative skills of a student (Anslinger, 2002; Covey & Thompson, 1999). The ACRE (2001) was field-tested with over 9,000 students to ensure high psychometric performance and was submitted to a cultural bias review panel to ensure freedom from such biases. The ACRE (2001) was also circulated among dozens of religious educators to make sure that the items were age appropriate (Convey, 2010). With the revision of the adolescent curriculum topical standards by the USCCB in *Doctrinal elements of a curriculum framework for the development of catechetical materials for young people of high school age* (2008), a revision of the ACRE (2013) was released to conform to the current curriculum framework including questions on cognitive and moral formative topics. There has been little research published about data from the new revision of the ACRE and its usefulness in secondary Catholic pedagogical practices. Further studies can explore and evaluate its curricular benefits.

**Adolescent education.** In the climate of contemporary culture adolescents often feel anxious about how a misunderstood or distorted comment could lead to peer ridicule, labeling, and

bullying (Malewitz, 2013). To grow and mature into who they are called to be and recognize their purpose in life, adolescents need a safe environment to be able to mature mentally, physically, and spiritually (Del Prete, 2010; Giussani, 2001). Self-discovery is therefore an essential search throughout adolescence (Dean, 2010; Marcia et al., 1993). Through learning about personal preferences, an adolescent comes to know who they are and their purpose with much more clarity. Catholic religious education should not only develop a sense of self-worth and dignity in catechesis and formation for an adolescent, but it needs to address and identify the need for self-worth and dignity in others (Malewitz & Pacheco, 2016). The challenge of self-discovery and developing mature and healthy relationships with others is a theme consistently present throughout the writings of Thomas Merton (Merton, 1959; Merton, 1983; Merton, 2015).

The challenge with the application of Thomas Merton's life and writings is that Merton offered no specific manual to implement his teachings or meditation practices. Merton left the interpretation to the reader to experience and understand his writings in the context of their world and their experience. As Suzanne Buturovich (Atkinson, 2015) recalled: "Tom never had any boxes, he never put himself in a box... he just expanded all the time." Traditional reductionist curriculum and assessments would not be beneficial for the application of the writings and life of Merton. To apply Merton's writings and themes in a curriculum response to bullying, it is important to use a curriculum theory that respects the expansive nature of Merton's nature and writing. Likewise, to authentically explore the nature of Merton's writings and themes in a context for adolescents a research methodology needs to respect the explorative nature native to Merton's passions and style.

The final section of this literature review will focus on curriculum. This section will offer a brief look at the focus and function of curriculum in 20<sup>th</sup>-century pedagogy. Secondly,

this section will introduce the explorative curriculum theory that will be used as a first iterative curricular response to bullying, for adolescents in Catholic schools based on the writings and themes of Thomas Merton.

## **Curriculum**

A traditional reductionistic definition for a curriculum in a course of study is a functional process that defines the goals and procedures for accurate transmission to attain predefined established goals (Bobbitt, 1921/1983). Scholars of an expansive lens of curriculum state that the educational development for every student is unique and the process and pedagogy to attain those goals should appreciate the individuality of the student and their needs (Ashfield, 2015; Montessori, 1912/2015). Since the 1970's, curriculum theory has evolved into a complicated discussion pursuing a deeper recognition of the purpose of education as well as the methods of fulfilling educational goals (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2014). To re-conceptualize the heart of curriculum, Pinar (2012) argued that curriculum should be approached in its etymological sense, as a verb rather than a noun; a process or dialogue to be experienced rather than a static constraint of predetermined goals. Through this perspective curriculum, referred to as *currere*, is defined as a “conversation with oneself (as a ‘private’ person) and with others threaded through academic knowledge, an ongoing project of self-understanding in which one becomes mobilized for engagement in the world” (p. 47). Although this concept of curriculum offered a revolutionary shift in curriculum thought and theory, the definition of *currere* remained an abstract concept and impractical for implementation in a reductionistic traditional classroom environment (Henderson & Kesson, 2004; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2014). Henderson and Gornik (2007) posit that *currere*, as an educational conversation, ought to be included in classroom pedagogy but by means of practical application.

In Catholic religious education and curriculum perspectives, Giussani (2001) and Shimaburuko (2007) fall into a moderate perspective between the two camps of a pure reductionistic and *currere* perspectives; weaving a broad goal-oriented curricular vision within the expansive nature of self-discovery and the dialogue of subject matter and spirituality in the complex experiences of the students within a classroom. Giussani (2001), Shimaburuko (2007), and Topping (2015a) state that moral transformation is an essential characteristic of Catholic pedagogical practices. To create cognitive and formative change students need to engage in the subject, self-discovery, the larger society, within a spiritual context.

Through the 3S Understanding curriculum structure, the natural conversation and dialogue of *currere* is embedded in a practical pedagogical structure to educate students to engage in self-reflection and be transformationally minded of the democratic values of society, evolving from the educational theory of John Dewey (Henderson & Kesson, 2004). Thomas Merton also held an expansionist view of the world; he did not reduce his interests to certain topics but was interested in the interconnectivity of various subjects and topics through interdisciplinary dialogue for a more contextual perspective of a topic (Atkinson, 2015; McDonnell, 1967). The 3S Understanding curriculum framework was chosen by the researcher as an inspiration for the 4S Understanding framework to create a *currere* experience that parallels Merton's style and writings, to create a dialogue and transformational experience for adolescents regarding human dignity and bullying. This section of the literature review on curriculum will explore the following topics: (a) curriculum theory and (b) the 4S Understanding curriculum framework and its roots.

**Curriculum theory.** Curriculum theory has been an essential and much discussed component of education over the last century (Bobbitt, 1921/1983; Foshay, 1980; Greene, 1995; Pinar,



Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2014). Traditional views of curriculum theory can often be divided into two perspectives: (a) task and activity analysis, structured on a scientific management style of preparation and assessment, or (b) a socially minded, moral democratic view of the development of the wholeness of the child through a process of maturation.

The task and activity analysis curriculum perspective, which evolved from the curriculum structure proposed by John Franklin Bobbitt (1876-1956), was specifically designed to prepare students for a career in the social structure of the post-industrialism (Bobbitt, 1921/1983). This social efficient lens viewed the purpose of educational curriculum was to assess a student on their ability based on a specific orientated task. Bobbitt argued that curriculum structure should be composed of scientific evidence for planning and preparing students for occupations, based on the need subject to subject (Jackson, 1975; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2014). Even today, there exists a great dependency in curriculum formation based on scientific social efficiency, as evidenced through national curriculum standards and the dependency of high stakes standardized testing (Abeles & Congdon, 2009; Abeles & Rubenstein, 2015).

John Dewey (1859-1952) offered a different perspective on the purpose of curriculum. Dewey argued that curriculum should teach knowledge preparing for real-life experiences but that the societal component in education also demands that student learn how to become a responsible moral citizen (Cahn, 2012). Dewey disagreed with the subject area divisionism and the comparative nature of assessments between students that were by-products of a scientific geared curriculum structure. Dewey believed that education should focus on intrinsic student growth. This democratic moral component within education is once again seen as an essential component of curriculum theory and development (Henderson & Gornik, 2007).

Since the Reconceptualization era of curriculum studies (1970-1979), curriculum theory has shifted toward student understanding through holistic praxis: thought and action in human engagement and discourse (Henderson & Gornik, 2007; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2014). One of the causes for this shift in curriculum focus was from the evolving understanding of the human person and search for self-actualization, based on the humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2014). Foshay (2000) stated that curriculum must recognize and create pedagogy that acknowledges that human beings act in a holistic design and are endlessly complex. Reza (2008) argues that the era of traditional reductionistic curriculum development is over; viewing curriculum as a manual of the development of day-to-day classroom activities has become an antiquated perspective of curriculum development.

In a Catholic curriculum perspective, Giussani (2001) and Shimabukuro (2007) advocate for the holistic education of students while acknowledging their inter-connectivity with their environment of learning and need to dialogue between communities is necessary for growth, not grounded in democratic decision making but in Catholic social teaching. Francis (2013) and John Paul II (1979) have reiterated that Catholic social teaching centers and radiates from the person and mission of Jesus of Nazareth. Giussani (2006) stated that it was from the engagement of the experience with the Incarnation that the Apostles first interpreted and shared the good news with others. Shimabukuro (2007) stated that by its nature faith and values need to permeate all aspects of Catholic pedagogy to authentically share the Christian message. It is through this authentic shared experience that Giussani (2001) stated that education is a relationship of risk, on both the part of the teacher and on the part of the student. This risk in the nature pedagogy creates a community founded on testing, trying, prying, and comparing to

previously held assumptions, myths, or beliefs to come to a new understanding and moral standard. Through this type of dialogue between the teacher and student, Giussani (2001) argued that the student matures in their relationship with the subject, self-discovery, and begins to negotiate their unique place as an adult in society through spiritual experience. Shimabukuro (2007) similarly argues that learning cannot be experienced in isolation but is dependent on the various complexities of that define the life of the student; namely, the underlying curriculum, or subject, and the expansive learning climate or community. Similar to the secular perspective of Eisner (2003b), Giussani (2001) and Shimabukuro (2007) also argued curriculums need to help students mature to become lifelong learners with skills that develop self-reliance, problem-solving, engage with real life, creativity, and decision making. It is important to acknowledge that there is a movement in both secular and Catholic religious curriculum theory that a practical and expansive, experiential, and dialogic approach to curriculum development is encouraged (Block, 2014; Giussani, 2001; Shimabukuro, 2007).

**4S Understanding curriculum framework and its roots.** Henderson and Kesson (2004) stated that the purpose of a curriculum is to serve and elicit transformation in the student and become a catalyst for beneficial dialogue and engagement with the world that the student inhabits. The 3S Understanding framework offers a curriculum perspective that brings societal concerns and challenges to the students for real-life learning experiences through curriculum decisions to imbue students with engaging and developing relationships with the subject matter in an experiential and contextual meaning (Henderson & Gornik, 2007). The 3S structure is founded on the principle that holistic student learning occurs in a relationship between the subject matter, self-discovery, and democratic moral responsibility (Henderson & Kesson, 2004). Henderson and Gronik (2007) posit that the 3S Understanding curriculum structure challenges educators and

students to move beyond fact recognition and recitation, and actively engage in a complicated classroom conversation on the course material that evolves into practical problem-solving judgments that cultivate enduring values in the students. Henderson and Gornik (2007) also state that through the curriculum wisdom process students demonstrate understanding through six facets, namely: explanation, interpretation, application, recognizing perspective, demonstrate empathy, and reveals self-knowledge. It is conjectured that through this transformational curriculum theory adolescents would engage and experience a deeper empathy and sense of dignity that exists in the whole human person (Giussani, 2001; Henderson & Kesson, 2004; Shimabukuro, 2007). Huggins (2016) recognized that a new curriculum perspective is needed that would help adolescents become more aware of the dignity of others which would result in the less likelihood of isolating and stigmatizing, which is established and perpetuated through bullying behavior.

For authentic curriculum development, it is important for planning to be visionary, emerging from a collaborative dialogue between the expectations of educators, students, and culture (Giussani, 2001; Henderson & Gornik, 2007). This process emerges from the dialogue between a holistic understanding of the course materials, appreciation of the student's journey and experience the material, assessment of the quality of the experiences of the student, and generative dialogues around topics and activities pertinent to the presented material (Shimabukuro, 2007). This open and expansive vision respects the student to express their knowledge through a personal and experiential mode that can demonstrate the authentic knowledge and wisdom developing in the student (Giussani, 2001). The curriculum is not a static entity but a fluid body that flows in concert with the needs of the student, dialogue of the educator, moral expectation of the culture, and wisdom warranted by the environment for the

formation of the student, not on a casual whim. Within the design of a 3S Understanding curriculum framework there exists strategic ambiguity in the curriculum to allow for the expansive nature of the expressive outcomes needed for a student to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and perspective of the material presented in the course. This strategic framing allows for the opportunity for a natural, real-life approach to the material, through expressive outcomes in a defined experiential environment (Ivarsson-Jansson, Cooper, Augusen, & Fryland, 2009; Reza, 2008). Lorie, Kritikos, Messerer, and LeDosquet (2007) offer an example of how real-life curriculum infusion could be used to address bullying with exceptional students.

This researcher chose the 3S Understanding as an inspirational curriculum perspective because of the relational nature of the framework which brings a student to greater understanding through self-discovery by engaging in the subject matter, self, and a moral responsibility with societal norm and morals. The 3S Understanding curriculum framework closely parallels the expansive thought and themes of Thomas Merton of self-discovery, acquisition of knowledge, and moral advocacy. To fully incorporate Merton's writings in a Catholic curriculum, though, a fourth component is needed; namely a spiritual dimension or component.

I created a new framework that includes a fourth S component, which would encompass all of the previous three components of subject matter, self-knowledge, and society. This fourth S, spirituality, would encompass all other aspects of the curriculum structure because the Catholic educational perspective directs that relationship to God is paramount in pedagogy (*National Directory of Catechesis*, 2005; *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, 2008; Francis, 2013). The 4S Understanding framework structure used within this study will include the

relationship that exists between the student and the subject matter, self-discovery, society, and spirituality in a reflective and dialogic manner.

**Summary.** Throughout the previous chapter it has been illustrated that adolescent bullying and bullying behavior between adolescents have become an epidemic (Huggins, 2016; Leonard, 2014). Scholars state that traditional reductionistic perspectives and punitive consequences to address adolescent bullying in schools has yet to decrease the frequency of bullying (Oliver, 2015; Philippe et al., 2017). It is essential to address adolescent bullying from new perspectives (Huggins, 2016). This study was created as a response to that concern.

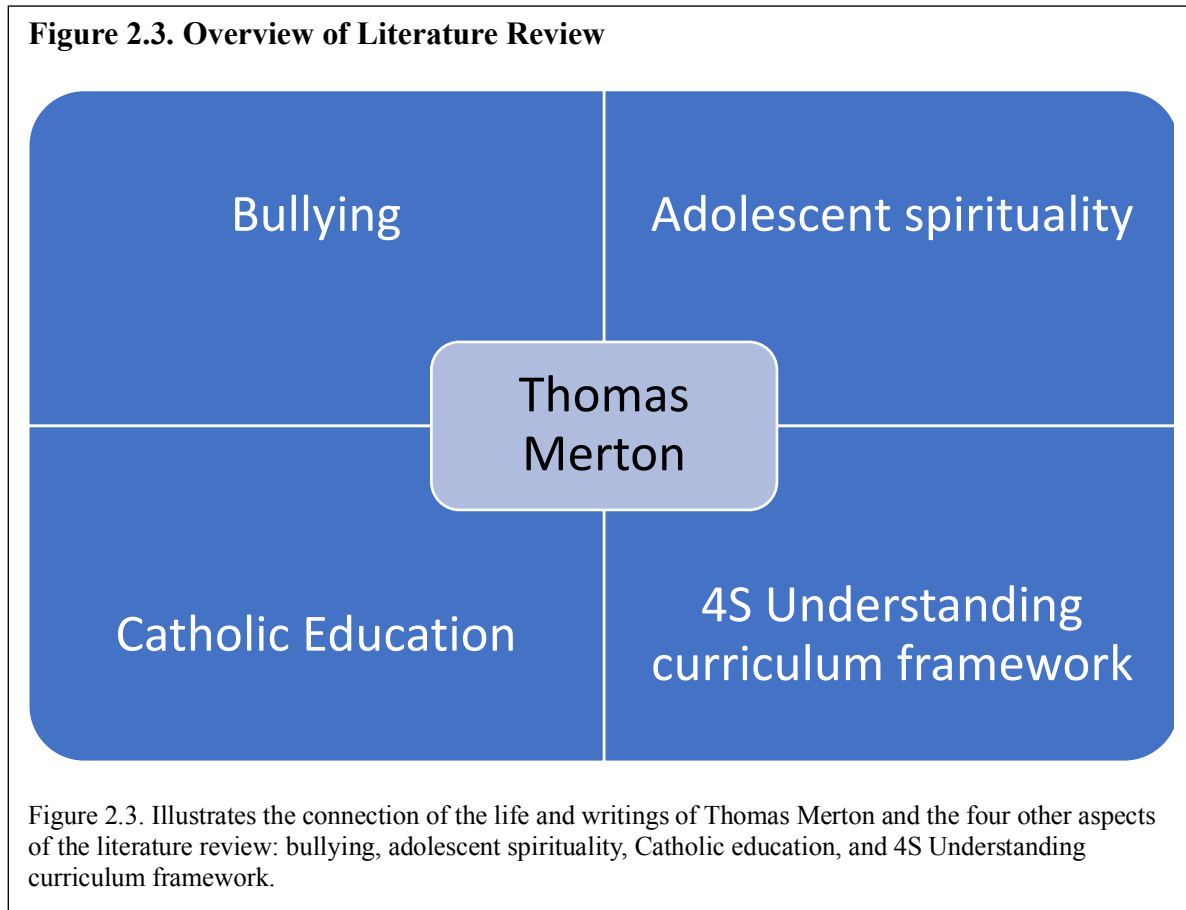
One belief on the onset of this study was that a Catholic secondary classroom could offer a new perspective in the conversation of adolescent bullying because of the ability to discuss the holistic nature of the human person: body, mind, and spirit. The Catholic school courses for adolescents currently embed topics and dialogues regarding the recognition of the dignity of the other in the existing curriculum standards (*Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, 2008; *Living as missionary disciples: National directory for catechesis worksheets*, 2017). Through a holistic approach to understanding the root of bullying, the creation of an enduring stigma, this author posits that a curriculum based on recognizing human dignity and communal unity may offer and explore a new perspective for curriculum responses to bullying. This holistic approach would need to engage a student through understanding the nature of a human being from the perspectives of body, mind, and spirit.

Discussing a spiritual component in the holistic nature of the human person has yet to be explored or implemented in common reductionistic anti-bullying curriculums, though it is an essential component to understand an adolescent's maturation when using a holistic approach to

respond to bullying (Huggins, 2016; Philippe et. al, 2017). As Canales (2011), Dean (2010), and Mercadante (2012) indicate adolescent spirituality is defined by three main aspects: self-discovery, passion, and advocacy. A curriculum response to adolescent bullying should incorporate the three aspects of self-discovery, passion, and advocacy to connect to the lived experiences of adolescents. Giussani (2001) stated that it is through experience that a student engages and negotiates the world to become an adult. A summary of the purpose and roots of Catholic educational practices were given to illustrate the nature of learning as experience and process of holistic maturation. The goal, or *telos*, of the process of holistic maturation is authentic happiness, which in Catholic ideology is communion with the divine (Topping, 2015b). Lastly, this chapter briefly discussed curriculum theory to explore a frame of best fit for the first iteration curriculum. It was shown that the 3S Understanding model offered an inspirational framework rooted in understanding through dialogue for a student to engage in the subject matter, self, society (Henderson & Gornik, 2007; Henderson & Keeson, 2004). A fourth component was added to address the spiritual nature that effects the holistic aspect of a student, creating a new 4S Understanding framework.

This chapter offered inquiry and research to demonstrate that the topics of bullying, adolescent spirituality, and Catholic education find direct connection with the life and writings of Thomas Merton, whose themes and writings are being used as the exemplar for the foundation of the first iteration curriculum. Figure 2.3 offers a visual representation of the interconnectivity

between the topics of this chapter, namely bullying, adolescent spirituality, Catholic education, and 4S Understanding curriculum framework, and their inclusion in the first iteration curriculum.



The following chapter will layout the development and design of the first iteration curriculum and an open-ended outline for each of the sessions. In the spirit of Merton and 4S Understanding framework, there is no concrete curriculum manual to be imitated word for word; the curriculum will unfold from four thematic topics to offer an expansive explorative of the student experiences (Giussani, 2001; Merton, 1979). A dialogue and experience of the first iteration curriculum will emerge from the environment it is presented in, as well as adaptations that need to be made according to the needs of the audience and cultural expectations. The



following curriculum will offer a basic, bare-bones version as a guide for further interest but is not intended to be copied and implemented verbatim.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **The Curriculum: No one is an island**

Communion is higher than communication... For example, this idea of communion in willingness to invent together a future that is not determined by our past. Think of all the things that come into this, all the elements that enter into this - for example this gives us a line on the Christian theology of mercy. Mercy invents a future from which the errors of the past are absent, in which the errors of the past are dissolved in love, communion, cooperation, and making the new - and making all things new. We need confidence that this is possible. (Merton, 2012)

Thomas Merton did not set out purposefully to write for an adolescent audience, and apart from a few individual correspondences, there is no record of Merton engaging a specific adolescent audience through his writings (Merton, 1989). Loughrey (2013) acknowledged that the depth of Merton's writings cannot be simplified easily, especially for adolescents. It is essential to present a curriculum for adolescents based on the themes and writings of Thomas Merton in a way for students to engage, dialogue, and research in a tangible and coherent way to reflect on the dignity of the human person and communion between people. The starting point to find a curriculum that mirrored Merton's writings was a framework that incorporated self-discovery and community relationship. The foundation of the 3S Understanding curriculum framework offered an inspiration to help shape and arrange subject matter, self-discovery, and civic virtue in a palpable way for the course of a morally driven curriculum (Henderson & Kesson, 2004). This framework parallels Merton's themes well as his focus, in a pedagogical perspective brings

together subject matter with self-discovery. With Merton's writings, though, the societal expectations would not be geared toward a civil democratic morality but rather anchored in an expansive Christian Humanistic ethical lens. As mentioned above, to include the spiritual expansive approach of Merton's ethic of Christian Humanism, a fourth S was included to create a distinct framework to be used within this study. The 4S Understanding framework used within this curriculum will be based upon the interconnectivity of: subject matter, self-discovery, societal expectations, and spirituality.

This chapter will serve as an overview of the background and evolution of the first iteration curriculum, based on the themes of Merton, to be used as a Christian Humanist response to adolescent bullying in a Catholic high school. First, a more thorough background on the life and legacy of Thomas Merton will be explored, as an explanation and to offer insight for the reader into the research and topical decisions that were made in the development of this first iteration curriculum. Then, the 4S framework for the first-iteration curriculum will be included for the reader, as well as an overview of the activities that were decided upon to incorporate within this first iteration. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a summary of the topical components of the first iteration curriculum. Artifacts created and used within the first iteration curriculum implementation, such as Powerpoint slides and handouts with open-ended reflective questions will be supplied in the appendix of this study for a comprehensive understanding of the implementation process.

### **Why Thomas Merton?**

Throughout Chapter 2, it was illustrated that the writings of Thomas Merton could be used as a beneficial foundation to address issues of contemporary adolescents and adolescent bullying because of his passionate life experiences as well as his comprehensive writings on self-

discovery and recognizing dignity of others (Loughrey, 2013; Merton, 1989; Merton, 1999). The writings and relationships in the life of Thomas Merton offer an unparalleled list of spiritual topics, commentaries, and writings for the American Catholic (Francis, 2015; McCaslin, 2014). He lived in a time of monumental social transition. Merton's articles, writings, commentary essays, and reflections speak to a changing Catholic Church through the new perspective of the Second Vatican Council, an American in the midst of a social revolution and the Civil Rights Movement, the morality and ethics of international war and the arms race, inter-religious dialogue, and a renewed focus on the dignity of the human person as well as in the other (Merton, 1971; Merton, 1975; Merton, 1980a; Merton, 1989; Merton, 1994; Merton, 2010). Although these topics were viewed through the lens of Catholicism, Merton often challenged long-held traditional views and came under scrutiny and censorship by his own community because of his approach of addressing certain topics throughout his writings (Merton, 1994; Merton, 1999).

Merton's directness in tone, self-identification as a Catholic anarchist, and spiritual writings continue to resonate with an American consciousness seeking change but desire unity, peace, and tolerance (Labrie, 2001; Merton, 1996; Stuart, 2014). Generations have become fascinated with his writings because of their continued freshness and application to contemporary challenges (Martin, 2006; O'Hare, 2018; Sisto, 2014). It is extremely difficult not to idolize Merton and mythologize his life into the role of a prophet. To that end though, Thomas Merton was an ordinary individual who was able to recognize deeper realities and write in such a way that awoke a desire in the spiritual ennui of the American culture (Francis, 2015; Merton, 1999; Moses, 2015). That desire still burns in the hearts of those who read and re-read his works, which is a testament to the power of the Spirit present in his writings.

## **Merton: Background and Biography**

Thomas “Fr. Louis” Merton, OCSO, was a Cistercian monk, Catholic priest, and prolific author of contemplative spirituality, civil rights activism, nonviolent resistance, and ecumenical as well as inter-religious dialogue (Crompton, 2004; Martin, 2006; Merton, 1980a; Merton, 1980b; Merton, 1989; Merton, 1994; Merton, 2010). Scholars have described him as a contemporary renaissance man because of his diverse authorship of poetry, commentaries of popular culture and events, social justice, religious ecumenism, and critique of historical events (Morris-Young, 2015). Merton continues to be personally remembered as completely down to earth (R. Sisto, personal communication, August 2, 2017; Wilkes & Glynn, 1984). “For me to be a saint means to be myself. Therefore, the problem of sanctity and salvation is in fact the problem of finding out who I am and of discovering my true self” (Merton, 2007, pg. 31). For Merton, holiness was not unattainable but very much a natural experience of becoming one’s true self. Throughout his life, Merton offered an example of an individual striving for holiness and virtue by just being who he was through an authenticity founded in the courage to admit his own brokenness and failure, while not giving up hope (Merton, 1999; Moses, 2015).

From his youth to his death Merton constantly read and was deeply aware of the challenges of the American culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from its historical influences to the contemporary perspectives of his day (Crompton, 2004; McDonnell, 1967). Merton’s writings illustrated his ability to draw connections of a human consciousness found in the transcendent realities that bound humanity as a whole, from Ancient Greek literature to the social movement of non-violence in the 1960’s (Merton, 1980a; Merton, 1980b; Merton, 1989; Merton, 2010; Merton, 2015). Merton offered a creative perspective into the mystery of God and one’s vocation in relationship with God (Merton 1983; Merton, 2007). Merton deeply believed that

this type of vocational relationship with God satisfied and gave meaning to all other relationships (Merton, 1983). From the perspective of an honest search for authenticity, Merton's writings realistically engage and relate to the struggles of the imperfect decisions and passions associated with adolescence (Dean, 2010; Merton, 1989). An overview of Merton's biography will be divided into the following sections as a background to give context for the first iteration curriculum: (a) youth, adolescence, and college years, (b) discernment and religious profession, (c) authorship and contemplative voice, and (d) advocacy and ecumenical dialogue. These sections will highlight Merton's experiences and writings that will create a foundation to aid in illustrating why his life and writings offer a good example as a foundation for a curriculum responding to adolescent bullying.

**Youth, adolescence, and college years.** Thomas Merton was born in 1915, in Prades, France, in the midst of World War I (Crompton, 2004; Merton, 1999). His father, Owen Merton, and mother, Ruth Jenkins, were traveling painters who were not religious (Merton, 1999). In his biography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton (1999) stated that due to the anxieties of Europe during the war his parents decided to move to America for safety, with Ruth's family in New York. While in America, Ruth had another son, John Paul, in 1918. When Thomas was six years old, his mother was diagnosed with stomach cancer and succumbed to the disease in 1921. After the death of his mother, Owen Merton traveled to Europe and labored as a painter. Merton accompanied his father during these travels through Europe, while Merton's younger brother John Paul stayed in America with his maternal grandparents. Because of his father's constant travels across Europe, Thomas Merton was often left at boarding houses or residential schools with little contact with his father for extended periods of time.

In 1928, Owen Merton moved to Oakham, England and brought Thomas with him (Merton, 1999). The following year Owen Merton became ill and traveled to London where he was diagnosed with brain cancer. Owen Merton died in 1931, leaving Thomas an orphan at sixteen. Thomas Merton recalled that the death of his father saddened and depressed him and that he felt a great void and hopelessness at the time (Merton, 1999, p. 94). Merton also acknowledged that his father's death created an emancipated belief in his own mind. In the summer of 1931, while on a ship to visit his grandparents and brother in America, Merton felt even more independence:

I concluded that I was now free of all authority, and that nobody could give me any advice that I had to listen to. Because advice was only the cloak of hypocrisy or weakness or vulgarity or fear. Authority was constituted by the old and the weak, and had its roots in their envy for the joys and pleasures of the young and strong. (Merton, 1999, p. 102)

Thomas Merton believed that he was independent and was free to do as he willed, as an adult. He finished the remaining years of his secondary education, independent, and apart from his remaining biological family in England (Merton, 1999).

Merton persisted in a strong individualistic perspective in relation to the world. He traveled across Europe after his secondary studies concluded, and in fall of 1933 entered Clare College, Cambridge with a scholarship. While at Clare College, Merton lived a lifestyle of excessive pleasure and passion for a college student: drinking and carousing (Crompton, 2004; Merton, 1999). During this period of excessive behavior, it has been mentioned that Merton possibly fathered a child, but what is clear is that he lost his scholarship to Clare College due to

poor grades (Merton, 1999; Royal, 1997). Merton was forced to move to America, closer to his grandparents because of his financial instability (Merton, 1999).

When Merton returned to America, he enrolled at Columbia University, and his restless nature began to settle through the influence of a new community of friends and engaging instructors (Merton, 1999). Two professors at Columbia, Mark Van Doren and Dan Walsh, made lasting impressions upon him. The relationships with Van Doren and Walsh developed and evolved into lifelong friendships (Merton; 1989; Merton, 1999). Merton was impressed with both educators' simplicity, direct, and authentic approach to education (Merton, 1999). Del Prete (1991) explained that Merton was captivated with Van Doren's honesty and search for truth; while Walsh was a trusted educator, guide, and confidant of Merton's Christian awakening and discernment (Daggy, 1980; Distefano, 1980).

Merton's relationship with Mark Van Doren particularly marked a turning in point in the aimless searching of Merton's life (Merton, 1999). Though Merton continued to be drawn deeper into the mystery of the connection between his vocation and the world; there was a dramatic shift from an immature restlessness to a mature interaction with others. Beyond the exchange of letters, Merton continued to meet with Van Doren and Walsh in person, even after his monastic profession within the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani (Merton, 1989; Van Doren, 1987).

**Discernment and religious profession.** Throughout his graduate studies at Columbia University, Merton experienced a spiritual awakening (Merton, 1999). Merton specifically recalled an experience, from February 1937, where he was captivated with a particular book sitting in the window at Scribner's bookshop in New York. After he purchased the book, *Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, he became frustrated that there was an imprimatur within in the text,

indicating that the text was officially sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church (Crompton, 2004; Merton, 1999). After he read the book, the experience served as a catalyst to a spiritual awakening (Merton, 1999). Roughly a year later Merton started attending Catholic Mass and sought to be baptized into the Catholic Church. He was baptized on November 16, 1938, and continued to zealously develop his faith life (Horan, 2014a).

After Merton concluded his Master's degree, he felt a calling to discern the vocation of a Catholic religious (Merton, 1999). Merton was initially encouraged by Dan Walsh, his teacher, friend, and mentor, to inquire about a vocation with the Franciscan friars (Horan, 2014a). The Franciscans did not accept Merton because of the passionate lifestyle of his youth, and after that disappointment, he spent a year teaching English at St. Bonaventure College, New York, in 1941 (Merton, 1999). It was during this year of teaching at St. Bonaventure that Merton took an Easter retreat to the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani, outside of Bardstown, Kentucky. Merton was drawn to the simple and rustic life of the Cistercians (Merton, 1999). He felt called to inquire about a monastic vocation with the Cistercians; and entered as a postulant with the monastery in December 1941 (Crompton, 2004). Signaling a change of character and his dedication to a new way of life, Merton was given a habit, a set of clothes identifying his new life in the community, and a new name, "Louis" (Merton, 1999).

**Authorship and contemplative voice.** Although Fr. Louis entered the monastic rule of the Cistercians, his talents of writing were not abandoned but were recognized and encouraged by his Superior, Dom Fox (Crompton, 2004; Lispey, 2015). He was called upon to write for the community as well as given permission from the abbot, the head of the order, to write his own reflections of his call to the monastic life, although Merton was at first reluctant to do so (Merton, 1999). In 1946, with permission of his abbot Merton submitted his spiritual



autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, for publication. *The Seven Story Mountain* was published in 1948, and became a national bestseller the following year (Merton, 1999; Horan, 2014a). Merton's autobiographical journey inspired many others to live for a deeper sense of purpose which led to the increased population of men interested in monastic life at Gethsemani (Aprile, 1998; Finley, 2003). From in 1949 to his death Merton was challenged in balancing fame and monastic life, struggling between the identity of Merton the celebrated author and Merton the contemplative monk.

Because of this influx of vocations and the attention of his writings, Merton was called upon by his Superior to serve as master of scholastics, the students studying for priesthood, from 1951-1955; followed by novice master, men just entering monastic life, from 1955-1965 (Crompton, 2004; The Merton Center, 2018b). These roles brought Merton directly into the role of guide and teacher for men in their discernment and first years in community life with the Trappist community. Merton continued to write poems, spiritual books, and reflections, and had numerous correspondence as he taught and was a spiritual guide with the monastery (Crompton, 2004; Merton, 1989). Over 400 hours of audio recordings of Merton's sermons, talks, and conferences have survived and are archived in the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University (The Thomas Merton Center, 2018c).

**Advocacy and ecumenical dialogue.** Merton did not shy away from controversy in his commentaries on world events, such the arms race, American racism, the Vietnam War, or national scandals (Merton, 1966; Merton, 1980a; Merton, 1989; Merton, 1994). He was not influenced to write his commentaries because of bandwagoning or readership, he saw himself as a nonconformist (McDonnell, 1967). In an interview with Thomas P. McDonnell (1967) Merton stated that "My most unpopular opinions have been those in which I have come out against the

Bomb, the Vietnam war, and in fact our whole social system” (p. 34). Merton was not concerned about popularity but felt called to advocate for purposeful change of societal structures and beliefs that dehumanized and perpetuated the objectification of the human person. Again, Merton’s perspective was that all of humanity was sacred and should be recognized as such (Merton, 1966/2009; Moses, 2015). On multiple occasions, in his journals, Merton labeled himself as a Christian anarchist; a label similarly used by Dorothy Day and the Catholic Workers’ Movement to express the belief that secular political systems need to be changed or removed because of their corrupt nature, and that the only allegiance one should truly have is to the teachings of Jesus (Labrie, 2001; Merton; 1996).

Merton was not a stereotypical contemplative monk and made that clearly known throughout his writings (McDonnell, 1967; Merton, 1989). Since his youth Merton was fond of jazz music, and was a musician who had rhythm to play piano and bongos well (Merton, 1989; Merton, 1999; R. Sisto, personal communication, August 2, 2017). He was taken with the folk music scene of the early 1960’s, particularly enjoying the lyrics and music of Bob Dylan and The Beatles (Merton, 1989). Toward the end of his life Merton described himself as an eccentric monk, in a response to a correspondence by Ms. Butorovich:

I live alone in the woods and borrowed a record player. I am a real sneaky hermit and oh yes I love the hippies and am an underground hippy monk but I don’t need LSD to turn on either. The birds turn me on. (Merton, 1989, p. 309)

Here Merton illustrated that he was savvy to contemporary trends and contemporary colloquial phrases and found a mystical beauty in the natural world.

The last years of his life Thomas Merton’s writings focused on the spirituality of ecumenism and nonviolence (Merton, 1975; Merton, 1980b). Merton’s interest in Eastern

religions and ecumenism bloomed again later in his life, though he initially had an interest in Eastern spirituality since his college years, before his conversion to Catholicism (Merton, 1999). In 1968, Merton was invited to give a keynote address for the Aide a l'Implantation Monastique Conference on monastic renewal, in Bangkok, Thailand (Horan, 2014a). With the permission of his abbot he was able to attend the Conference and dialogue with several religious leaders from the Eastern Traditions, including the Dalai Lama (Horan, 2014a; Merton, 1975). He gave a lecture at the Conference entitled "Marxism and Monastic Perspectives" during which his final words were recorded (Weakland, 2009). Merton died that afternoon on December 10, 1968, during the Conference in Bangkok, Thailand (Crompton, 2004). It was not exactly clear how he died, the Thai death certificate stated that the cause of death was due to cardiac failure and accidental electrocution; Merton was found with burn marks on his arm from a fan that fell on top of him while getting out of the shower (Weakland, 2009).

Thomas Merton's views of his writings and life evolved substantially as he matured spiritually (McDonnell, 1967). His youth and young adult years, although a time of discovery, were filled with anger, frustration, resentment, and wild behavior (Merton, 1999). As he discovered his vocation and developed a deeper relationship with God his behavior likewise developed into a more compassionate, understanding, and unitive force (Merton, 1980b; Merton, 2007; Merton, 2010; Merton, 2015). It is important to look at the passion of the reckless youthfulness and the natural mystical wisdom of his life and relationships to exemplify his voice as an example of hope and change, which parallels the potential of hope and growth in adolescents (Canales, 2011; Dean, 2010).

### **On Respecting the Life and Writings of Thomas Merton**

Before I progress further, it is important to acknowledge while researching the life and experiences of Thomas Merton I came across a passage in an interview toward the end of his life which offers a telling insight into Merton's character. Thomas Merton attempted, and continuously struggled, to keep a balance between his private monastic life and the celebrity attention and fame from the secular world that was created by the readers of his works. Merton was acutely aware of the difference between the person, Fr. Louis, and the legend that encompassed the name, Thomas Merton. I would be negligent in my research throughout this study if I omitted Merton's own words and desire regarding the growing cult surrounding his writings: "The legend is stronger than I am. Nevertheless, I rebel against it and maintain my basic human right not to be turned into a Catholic myth for children in parochial schools." (McDonnell, 1967). This statement leaves a researcher in a precarious situation for a study using Merton as a model, specifically for the education of students in parochial schools. To honor Merton's own desire, I plan to do the following to ensure the integrity and dignity of Merton and his work from becoming trivialized, or becoming a Catholic myth in the mind of students:

1. The curriculum included in this study will aim to draw upon the themes present in the literature instead of Merton's person alone. Although Thomas Merton can still be idolized by many of his contemporary and first-generation readers, secondary students now half a century removed from Merton's death. To establish a connection and engage students in the events of Merton's time and culture it might be useful to include some basic biographical information essential for students to understand his identity and writings in context of a community. My hope is that through this perspective his identity will not escalate further into a Catholic school myth but remembered in context to the time and culture in which his material is discussed.

2. The application of Merton's writings will not be used as an end in and of themselves throughout the formation of the curriculum. It is essential that Merton is not the primary focus of the lessons but rather that his words and writings serve as a bridge, or interlocutor, for students to gain knowledge and growth of their identity and grow in relationship with the other.

My hope is that this study will keep these aspects in focus to recognize and respect the dignity and desires of Thomas Merton.

### **First-Iteration Curriculum: Framing and Development**

Bullying is recognized as an epidemic, which affects adolescents emotionally, physically, psychologically, and spiritually (Huggins, 2016; Leonard, 2014). Bullying behaviors create a stigma upon the victim and the bully that develops into an identity in the minds of those around them and can perpetuate a dehumanization of the dignity of the both, the victim and bully (Huggins, 2016). Although school administrators attempt to address bullying behaviors through yearly sessions for students, such sessions are focused on reductionist policies which are often accompanied by extreme consequences of failure of compliance (Philippe et al., 2017). The idea to create a curriculum based on the themes and writings of Thomas Merton emerged out of my concern and desire as a theology and philosophy educator in a secondary Catholic school, who has experienced micro-aggressions and lack of dignity shown from adolescents toward other adolescents, inside and outside of the classroom environment. After researching further into the writings of Merton, bullying, adolescent spirituality, and Catholic education, I have come to believe that anti-bullying curriculums that neglect a holistic perspective are going to continue to miss an opportunity for authentic change.

The first-iteration for the curriculum was designed with purposeful ambiguity in presentation and explorative in nature so that the students could experience and dialogue the topics within the curriculum. This design decision was to offer the students the opportunity to be open and forthright with their responses to the curriculum, so that through exploration and analysis trends from the student experiences can naturally emerge and inform future study and research. Similarly, a curriculum wisdom framework is not standardized in its design but finds its strength in the adaptability and evolutionary structure that comprises its core (Henderson & Kesson, 2004).

There are many themes from Merton's writings that could and should be studied and researched and applied to adolescent education and pedagogy, such as the search for authentic human identity, contemplative prayer, nonviolence, and community (Shannon, 2005). The themes: order, balance, rhythm, and harmony were chosen for this curriculum because they are mentioned by Merton as the key to finding authentic happiness: "Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance and order and rhythm and harmony" (Merton, 1983, p. 127). Since happiness is the goal of humanity as stated in the Christian Humanistic ethic, which is used as a lens for this study, I found it was providential that Merton specifically wrote that these themes were the avenue to achieve that goal. I also chose the themes of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony for this explorative first-iteration curriculum because I felt that these themes would offer a variety of kinesthetic activities that would engage adolescents in a cognitive and experiential learning opportunity to respond to adolescent bullying.

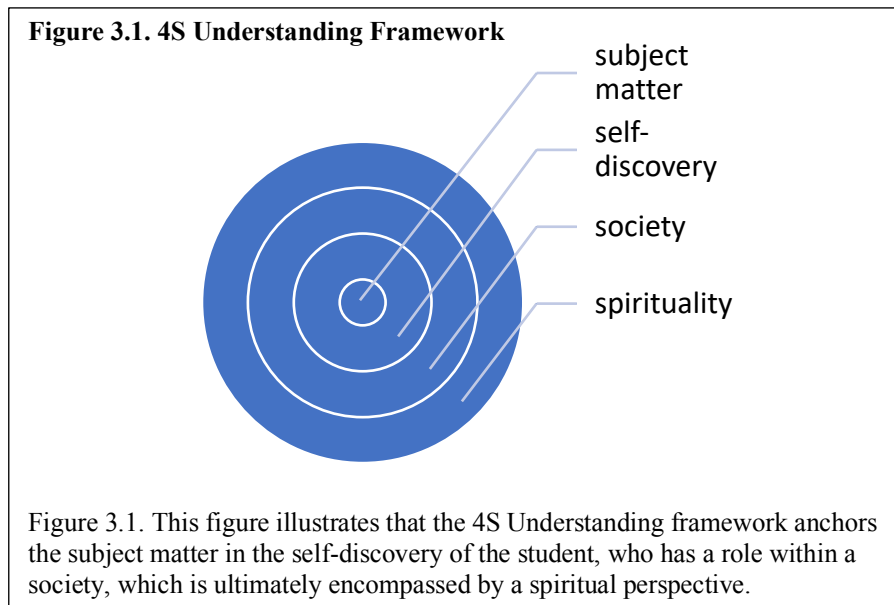
Merton does not seem to identify one theme as greater to any of the other three, but that they all necessary together. Although stated in this particular list, it was not my intention that the session units had to be sequential when implemented with students in the classroom. For this

first iteration and exploration I was interested in learning about the student experiences of these topics and their experiences of the activities related to the themes. As the topical activity ideas started to form and develop into place there seemed to be a natural progression associated with the topics, from order to harmony; but it was not my intention that a progression was absolutely necessary.

Although these four themes: order, balance, rhythm, and harmony were specifically stated by Merton as the avenue through which happiness is found (Merton, 1983), the four themes are rooted in more ancient Christian monastic practices than the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Order, balance, rhythm, and harmony are also essential aspects of the Benedictine monastic tradition (Dysinger, 2003). The Cistercian Order, the community that Thomas Merton belonged to, was established in 1098 A.D. as a monastic order that vowed a reformed and strict adherence to the Rule of the Benedict, which originated in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. (The Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, 2018). It is important to note that Merton's insights and context for authentic happiness were not just localized or a passing trend in secular or contemporary Christian thought but take root in centuries old monastic traditions.

Each of these four sections: order, balance, rhythm, and harmony include research to support and justify the curriculum decisions I made for this first iteration, as well as an outline of the class sessions that would accompany the four major themes. Although there is intended adaptability embedded in the curriculum structure, the first iteration curriculum is set within a bounded experience of 10 school days to offer time to experience and reflect upon on the four thematic topics and associated activities. It is important to remind the reader that this curriculum is based on the concept of *currere*, based on the 4S Understanding. It will not be structured like a manual. The purpose of the *currere* is to be open to student dialogue and self-exploration and

for an educator to allow such experiences; the rigid use of a manual would create an inhibiting atmosphere for the explorative and experiential process (Henderson & Gronik, 2007; Henderson & Kesson, 2004). The following Figure 3.1 offers a visual representation of the structure of the 4S Understanding. The topics were created to engage students with the theme, reflect on self-discovery, their role within society, and finally how spirituality encompasses the subject, self, and society as a whole.



The content for this first iteration curriculum is in alignment with the current standards for a theology course as set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the governing body of Catholic education (*Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, 2008). Along with the current curriculum standards, students are invited to engage in activities that will explore topics to reflect and respond to the course material and connected course activities. Specifically, for this first iteration curriculum activities include: a) watching and reflecting on a film, *The Human Experience*, which explores human dignity and life circumstances of homelessness in New York, AIDS victims and lepers in Ghana, and an orphanage in Peru; b) engaging in a



dialogue and reflection on their personal experiences of community service (which is part of the requirements of freshmen year theology); c) engaging and reflecting on a meditation experience; and d) engaging and reflecting on the unitive nature of a group drumming experience.

The remaining sections of this chapter focus on the topics of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony and describe the themes and concepts used to frame the curriculum as well as the development and justification of the proposed activities within the curriculum. Each thematic topic offers an introduction and background of the theme then be divided into the following sections: a) the topic; b) the session implementation expectations; c) the activity used for session implementation; d) a figure outlining the 4S Understanding framework for the session. Finally, a master table outlining the summary of the complete curriculum will be supplied at the conclusion of this chapter for a better visual connection between the topics and classroom activities. Copies of all curriculum artifacts used within the implementation are supplied in the appendix of this study and will be referenced throughout each section as needed.

**Order.** Order is an essential part of community living (Arnold, 1995). An ordered society or community creates the boundary of expectation and a context for society expectations and standards. The discussion and dialogue of the norms of a society have evolved and developed from the most ancient times, such as the Mesopotamian Code of Hammurabi, from 1700BC, The Torah, as well as numerous Rules that have established the expectations and way of life for living in communities within the Catholic tradition. Thomas Merton felt drawn to the order that was present in the discipline and rigor of the Cistercian Order (Merton, 1999). It is through learning a moral social order that students can learn the societal norms and contribute as beneficial members of a society (Henderson & Kesson, 2004).

To respond to bullying and stigmatization in adolescent culture, it is necessary to address bullying for an approach that recognizes a positive order, which would include understanding and recognizing the importance and benefits of establishing perimeters within a society or group. The topical theme of order was included in the first iteration curriculum not only because it was stated by Merton as of the four themes that contributes to happiness, but also because of its foundational importance in learning and dialoguing about the need of societal norms. Peterson (2018) stated that order within the individual leads to civility and order in relationship with others.

In a Catholic community, authentic religious education and formation are based on consistency and respect of the inherent order and hierarchy of truths (*Living as missionary disciples: National directory for catechesis worksheets*, 2017). One of the foundational truths of Catholic doctrine is the Incarnation, which fueled Merton's focus on the dignity of the human person (Moses, 2015). This theology of the Incarnation influenced Merton to recognize that although Catholics are sacred as being in Christ, every single person is just as sacred. Merton (1966/2009) stated:

I have the immense joy of being *man*, a member of a race in which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this!... Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sun nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could see each other that way all the time (pp. 154-155)

Merton mentioned, through his mystical experience at 4<sup>th</sup> and Walnut in Louisville, Kentucky, that the great order is that humanity itself is sacred and that every single person is part of this sacred creation.

An ordered society does not exist in a vacuum. Merton (1969/1979; 1983; 1989) also argued that self-discovery and the ordering of one's self are necessary to have healthy relationships with others. The topic activity and reflection for this topic derive from recognizing that order is essential both in society and in one's life.

*The topic.* To produce an engaging curriculum discussion on the topic of order, I needed to find a real-life example to establish context for the students to problem solve, dialogue, and work in groups to research about the purpose and benefit of order within a society. Through dialoguing with an educational colleague from the Literature department, I refined the example, activity, and reflection questions that would challenge the students to critically think and examine the collaborative experience. The colleague suggested using the historical context of the 16<sup>th</sup> century lost colony of Roanoke, as the real-life example of rebuilding a society and structure from the ground up. The historical example of Roanoke had not been discussed in the theology course and would be too out of context for my students; I also thought that such an example would not involve a clear experience of social justice advocacy associated with an understanding and connection with societal out casting and stigmatization. After further exploration, I decided to use the ghost town of Bulembu, Swaziland, as the contextual example for the theme of order. The example of the struggles of the town of Bulembu had been discussed briefly during the freshmen theology course and the students would be vaguely familiar with the plight of the town in connection to the curriculum topic of the Beatitudes.

In 2001, the asbestos mining corporation that built and operated the town of Bumlebu for half a century closed, which caused the relocation of 10,000 residents (Liou, 2012). This exodus of residents in Bulembu concurrently occurred during the highest effects of the HIV AIDS epidemic which ravaged Swaziland, which saw a 900% increase of inflection of the disease throughout the country (Challenge Ministries Swaziland, 2018; Mann, Kelly, McMillan, Frank, & Ditrich, 2011). The abandoned mining corporation and epidemic left 50 residents in the town, which were primarily orphans. In 2006, Challenge Ministries Swaziland bought the town and began plans to restructure the ghost town to become self-sustaining by 2020 (Challenge Ministries Swaziland, 2018). I believed that this example would engage the students by: a) connecting to a real-life situation; b) containing a social justice component for advocacy for outcasts, namely, HIV AIDS victims and orphans; c) involving students in a role as an advocate for the situation; and d) using and evolve previously gained knowledge in a new application and context.

*The session implementation expectations.* The session on the theme of order was developed as a two-day classroom experience, which included an activity, reflective essay, and brief large group dialogue. During the first day of the topic, the students were briefly reintroduced to the historical context of the town of Bulembu, Swaziland, and the actual rebuilding project of the ghost town. The students recollected the rebuilding efforts of the town led by Kevin Ward and Neil Rijkenberg of Challenge Ministries Swaziland (Challenge Ministries Swaziland, 2018). Students then worked in a group scenario activity, using the game Jenga as a metaphor, to experience and reflect about healthy and unhealthy collaboration and communication techniques that could offer insights to team commissioned to work together and restructure a ghost town like, Bulembu. The kinetic activity of playing Jenga would offer a multi-modal learning experience regarding

collaborating and communicative skills. The activity was envisioned for student groups, comprised of three or four students per group, to dialogue together to keep their Jenga block tower standing as long as possible. After the Jenga tower fell, or if the group concluded without the Jenga tower falling by the end of the class period, the students were to reflect by individually answering questions on a worksheet. On the second day, the students would have time to reflect on more questions in essay format regarding the experience and conclude with a group discussion of their experiences of the activity.

*The activity used for session implementation: Collaborative Jenga.* There were several materials created to help the students explore and experience the unitive nature of collaboration and communication throughout this session. To clearly introduce the topic and activity expectation for the students, a 6-slide Powerpoint presentation was created to be used throughout the first day of the session (See Appendix A.1, A.2, and A.3). These six slides contained material to introduce the real-life context of Bulembu, an opening prayer for the theology class, established the scenario for the students for the activity, and established the rules and expectations of the activity during the session.

A worksheet was also created for the students, which contained further clarification of the scenario and activity expectations (See Appendix A.4). The purpose of this worksheet was for the group of students to create three group rules before playing the game Jenga. These rules would serve as context for understanding order and chaos within the group experience. The students were supposed to create three rules before they played Jenga and during the second day reflect on how those rules were followed or not followed throughout the course of the game. The second worksheet handout contained reflection questions that the students were to answer individual regarding their experience of their group, their rules, and the overall experience of the

collaborative activity (See Appendix A.5). The second day of the session would offer students time for reflection on the questions and then bring the students together for a large group, Socratic dialogue style, discussion to share their experiences and interpretations of the activity.

*4S Understanding framework: order.* Using the 4S Understanding framework, this session lays a foundation of the concept of order; challenging the student-participants to define and reflect through an open-ended dialogue of the concept within a real-life experience of a struggling community, namely the rebuilding efforts in Bulembu. The student-participants then work and communicate together to establish and reflection on successful collaboration strategies. The spirituality component of this session is embedded within the social justice component of working for the betterment of others, who although live with disease and poverty, nonetheless are equally sacred in dignity. Figure 3.2 illustrates the multi-multifaceted aspects of this lesson within a 4S Understanding framework.

**Figure 3.2. Order: 4S Understanding**

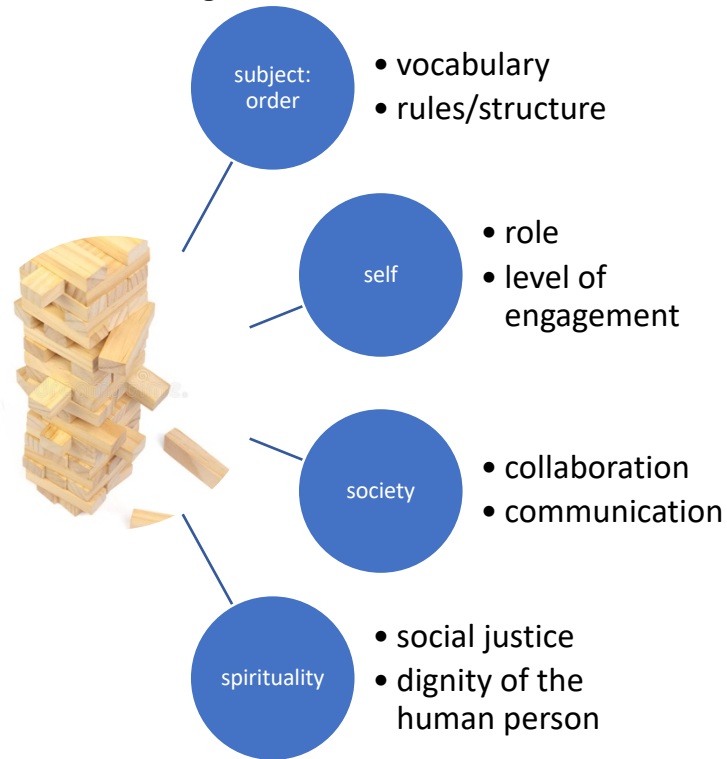


Figure 3.2. represents the 4S Understanding components for the session on order: a) subject; b) self; c) society; and d) spirituality

Figure 3.2. represents the 4S Understanding components in session regarding the topic of order: a) subject, where the student-participants are invited to dialogue about rules and structure within the student-participants' groups; b) self, where the student-participants are invited to assessing their role in the group and their level of engagement; c) society, where the student-participants are invited to dialogue about the collaborative and communicative skills needed to complete the task; and d) spirituality, where the student-participants are invited to dialogue about the dignity and nature of the others of the community in need of assistance.

**Balance.** Balance has been acknowledged as an important element associated with human virtue since the ancient Greek philosophical writings of Aristotle (Pojman, 1998; Topping, 2015b). Balance keeps the body from becoming distorted from excess or deficiencies. Balance, or stability, is one of the vows associated with the Benedictine Order in the Catholic Tradition,

which influenced the creation and spirituality of Merton's Order, the Cistercians (Dysinger, 2003). Scholars state that a healthy balance of mind and body can help relieve stress, decrease emotional instability, and offer a sense of calm instead of feelings of animosity (Baesler, 2015; Zinger, 2008). As mentioned previously, adolescence is a stage of life with great passion and an increase of hormonal release (Dean, 2010). It is a challenge for adolescents to find balance in life and that stress may be a contributing factor to the inability to control emotions and responses to others in their life (Marcia et. al, 1993).

A growing trend in classroom management is the practice of Meditation to help students find balance and offer a sense of calm in their life (Mata, 2013; Oaklander, 2018; Zinger, 2008). Retreat and wellness centers are offering courses and certifications for educators to learn how to introduce meditation into the classroom and help students balance the stress in their life (Salem & Walter, 2015). Research has indicated that meditation does soothe and calm adolescents (Mata, 2013; Salem & Walter, 2015). With this in mind, I wanted to explore how a meditative activity might offer insight into a response to bullying through the relief of stress or centering the mind of an adolescent away from an explosive reaction or situation, from the experience and perspective of the adolescent.

*The topic.* To better understand centering and meditation techniques I enrolled in a meditation retreat to have an introduction to meditation practices before I implemented a session for students. The retreat offered techniques on cultivating meditative practices through sitting, walking, with and without chanting. I also contacted a local retreat and spirit center known for their courses on meditation for information and techniques regarding meditation for adolescents. Along with receiving recommendations on meditative postures and various styles of meditation,



I also received advice regarding how to use incense or music, as well as visual storytelling techniques for guided meditation practices.

For the first iteration curriculum, assuming that freshmen students had little to no experience with meditation, I decided to keep them as still as possible, namely a sitting meditation. Due to location and space availability in the school environment, a walking meditation would be too difficult. I also decided not to use music as the adolescents might feel distracted by a particular tone, chant or song, interpreting it more as goofy or humorous than calming. Under the circumstances I felt a guided meditation would not allow the students to be as free and open with their answers and reflections, creating too much of a restriction of the student-participants' language and experience. I ultimately decided to explore the use of a silent, sitting meditative experience. To start and stop the experience I used a YouTube clip of a Tibetan singing bowl chime (Freeman, 2015), which included a gong tone played only at the beginning and end of an otherwise silent the audio clip; it was timed for a 20-minute duration. Mata (2013) suggested that about a 10-minute meditation might be a good starting timeframe, I explored the possibility of being prepared for to have a 20-minute meditation timeframe in case there happened to be interruptions and disturbances within the school location.

*The session implementation expectations.* The session on balance was developed as a two-day classroom experience including a meditation, personal journaling, and an oral group sharing of the experience. The first day would introduce the purpose of the activity, travel to a quiet room on campus, such as a chapel, and experience the meditation. The second day would involve a 20-minute personal freestyle journal time of the experience of the meditation followed by a large group dialogue to share their experiences of the meditative activity.

*The activity used for session implementation: Silent meditation.* There were two worksheet handouts created to help the students explore and share their experiences of the meditation. To introduce the topic and activity expectation for the students, one worksheet handout contained clarification of the experience and activity expectations (See Appendix B.1). The purpose of this worksheet was for the group of students to gather their thoughts and offer open-ended guided questions regarding before and after the meditative experience. These pre-/post- questions were not intended to be used as a pre-/post- test, but to help guide the students offer context and share their experiences before and after meditation. The second handout consisted entirely of blank lines for the students to offer free response journaling about their meditation experience without the assistance of a contextual question (See Appendix B.2).

*4S Understanding framework: balance.* Using the 4S Understanding framework, this session lays a foundation of the concept of balance; challenging the student-participant to individually reflect and define the concept within a real-life experience of their life and feelings. The student-participants would engage in silent meditation, within a moderated group setting, and reflect on their experience of the meditation. The spirituality component of this session is embedded within the reflection component of working for the betterment of one's inner-self. Figure 3.3 illustrates the multi-multifaceted aspects of this lesson within a 4S Understanding framework.

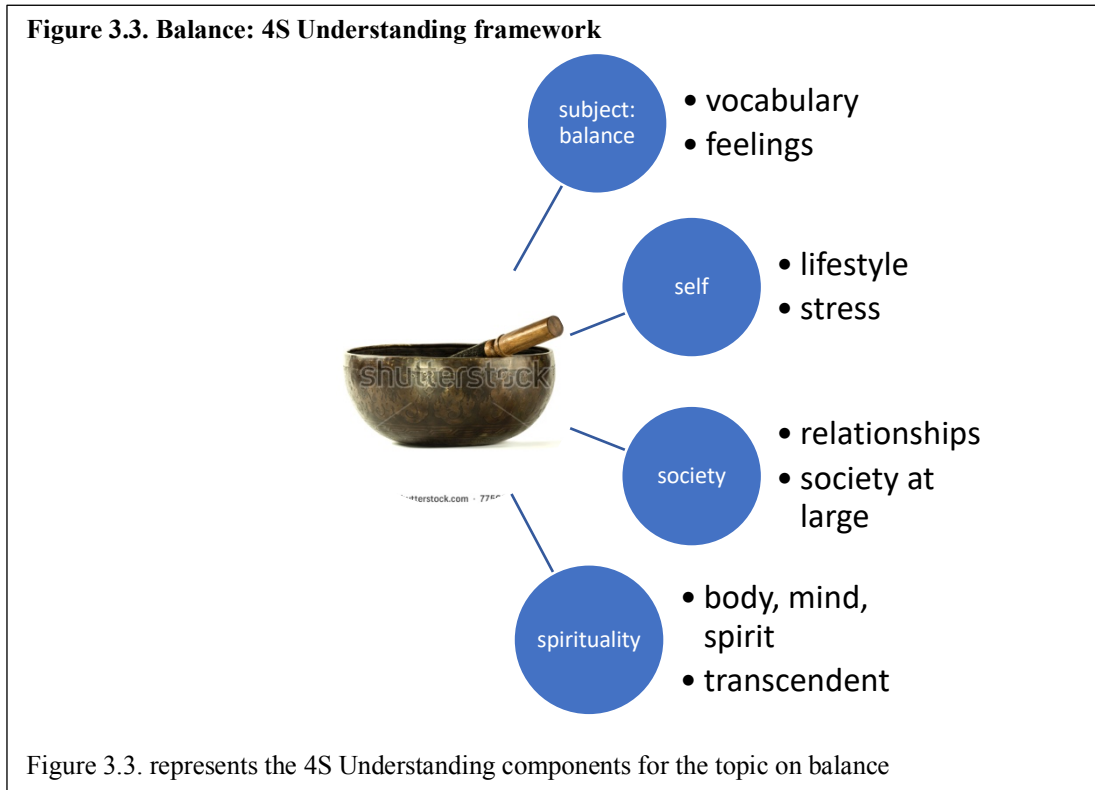


Figure 3.3. represents the 4S Understanding components of the session on balance: a) subject, where the student-participants are invited to reflect about their meditation experience and explore their feelings within their personal journals; b) self, where the student-participants are invited to reflect on their lifestyle and internal stressors in their journal; c) society, where the student-participants are invited to reflect about their relationships of family and other at-large community based on their meditative experience in their journals; and d) spirituality, where the student-participants are invited to dialogue about the balance of their holistic nature of body, mind, and spirit.

**Rhythm.** Rhythm is also an essential element in life. It develops and sustains various aspects of human communication and relationships. The study of activities of synchronous and rhythmic patterns indicate a promotion of affinity and emotional connectivity (Hove & Risen, 2009; Molnar-Szakacs & Overy, 2006; Stupacher, Maes, Witte, & Wood, 2017). In light of the affinity

and group identification that is developed through rhythmic activities, business retreats and social ministries have included rhythmic activities, such as drumming circles for on-boarding activities to develop and teach community rebuilding and emotional connectivity (Mattingly, 1995; McCrary, 2015; Stevens, 2003). Hull (2013) combined the rhymical nature of drum circles and the spirit of learning cooperation and collaboration into an educational setting for educators and music teachers.

Although Thomas Merton was most known for his spiritual writings and poetry, he is remembered by his closest friends as a man with great rhythm through his love of jazz and contemporary musicians like Baez, the Beatles, Dylan, and Jefferson Airplane (Merton, 1989). Although there is little physical evidence of Merton's own musical ability, there exists a picture of Merton playing his bongos captured by Eugene Meatyard (Meatyard, 1991). While interviewing Richard Sisto for this project, I also learned that Merton was a jazz pianist of no ordinary talent, who would enjoy playing music for the frogs on the monastic grounds (R. Sisto, personal communication, August 2, 2017). Beyond Merton's personal musical talents, the very life of a monastic monk is one governed on rhythm. Individuals living in religious life are to follow the Divine Office, or the periodical praying of the psalms throughout the course of the day, as well as establishing and maintaining the natural rhythm of a monastery in the chant used throughout monastic liturgical service (Paul VI, 1963). In light of an adolescent's deep connection with music and because of Merton's love of music and rhythm, music was a necessary component to include in the nature of this first iteration curriculum and exploration.

*The topic.* At the beginning of the school year, freshmen students experience a retreat day where they have the opportunity to experience different arts, related to elective courses. One of the consistent breakout sessions is a drum circle. Throughout the 30-minute session, the instructor

introduces the students to the nature and unitive power of cultural drumming. To help unite the freshmen students as a class, he teaches the students a simple pulse to make one sound together. He teaches the students to listen to the rhythm and have their pulse become a single rhythm. After learning the single pulse, the students are then divided up into parts, where the student groups would play a synchronous rhythm pattern while the teacher would play a counter-rhythmic pattern. The event usually concludes with student groups divided into a three-part rhythmic pattern. The students need to rely on and listen to each other to stay in time and with the rhythm of the drum circle. I would like to explore the experiences of students to the drum circle within the first iteration curriculum as an activity to create a tangible context to discuss the theological vocabulary content of unity and collaboration.

*The session implementation expectations.* The session on balance was developed as a two-day classroom experience including a drum circle experience. After the drum circle experience, the students would engage in personal journaling and reflection questions of the experience. The first day would introduce the purpose of the activity, travel to a room to conduct the drum circle on campus, such a chapel or the band room and use djembes, congas, or similar personal hand drum to create the drum circle. The second day would involve a 20-minute personal freestyle journal time of the experience and possibly use additional audio/video clips to reinforce concepts of listening and the collaborative nature of sustaining a rhythm.

*The activity used for session implementation: Drum circle.* For this activity it was necessary to have access to enough hand drums for all students in the class. I am not proficient in creating drum circles and found resources (Hull, 2013; Stevens, 2003) to help develop my knowledge of creating drum circles in case a guest teacher was unable to be present during the activity. I also wanted to include a couple audio/video clips for students to listen to and engage after the drum

circle experience. At the time of the writing of this chapter I had not decided on which video clips to use. Those clips will be specified and mentioned in further length in Chapter 5.

Two worksheets were also created for this session. One worksheet offered a brief explanation of the purpose of the experience, as well as guiding questions that focused on the experience of music and how to sustain and maintain a consistent rhythm (See Appendix C.1). The second handout consisted entirely of blank lines for the students to offer free response journaling about their experience without the assistance of a contextual question (See Appendix C.2).

*4S Understanding framework: rhythm.* Using the 4S Understanding framework, this session lays a foundation of the concept of rhythm; challenging the student-participants to reflect and dialogue the purpose and benefit of rhythm within a real-life experience of a musical group, a drum circle. The student-participants would engage in the drum circle activity within a moderated group setting, and reflect on their experience of being part of the drum circle. The spirituality component of this session would involve dialoguing about the embedded nature of communal life in society and the Church. Figure 3.4 illustrates the multi-multifaceted aspects of this lesson within a 4S Understanding framework.

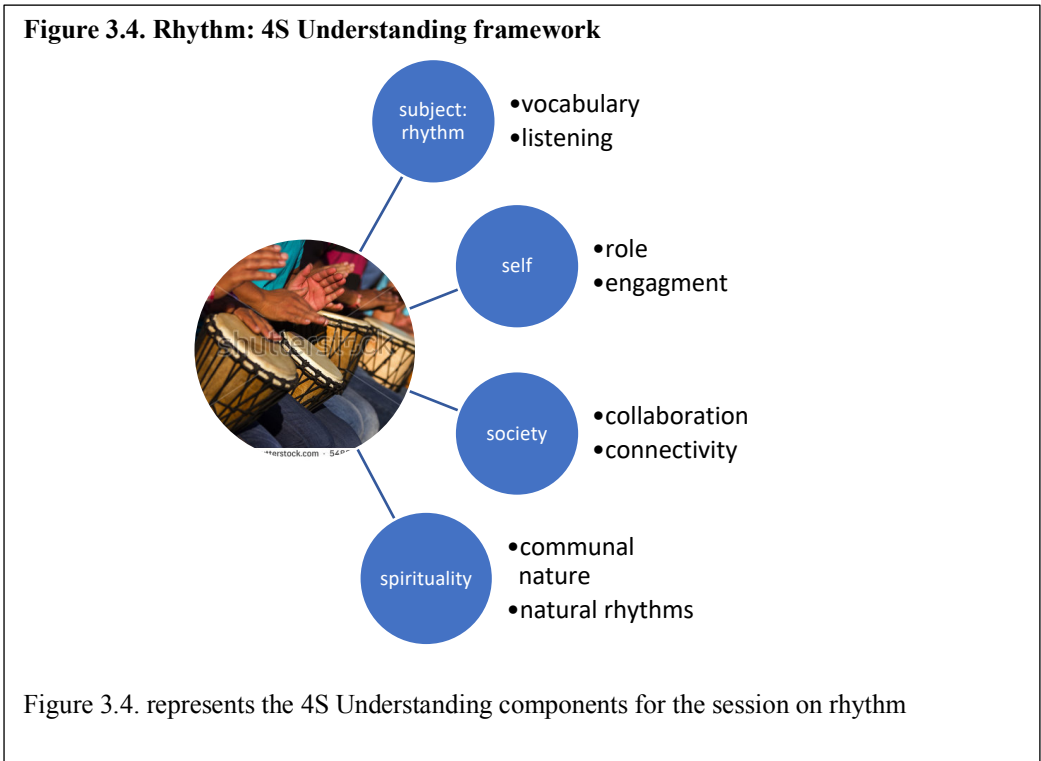


Figure 3.4. represents the 4S Understanding components of the session on rhythm: a) subject, where the student-participants are invited to reflect about their drum circle experience, specifically on their vocabulary and listening skills; b) self, where the student-participants are invited to reflect on their role within the group and their effort and engagement; c) society, where the student-participants are invited to reflect about their collaboration and how this experience might illuminate connectivity in other aspects of society; and d) spirituality, where the student-participants are invited to dialogue about the nature of communal identity and the natural rhythms that define the environment.

**Harmony.** Harmony, and the spirit of unity, could be considered one of the greatest enduring themes in the writings of Thomas Merton (Merton, 1966/2009). From ecumenical matters and inter-religious dialogue of bridging the spiritual dialogue between Christianity and Zen Buddhism, as well as the resistance to violence in war and racism in the 1960's, Merton taught

that the human race was essential more connected and one in nature, than divided (Merton, 1966/2009; Merton, 1975; Merton, 1994; Merton, 2010). The idea of harmony and united human spirit continues to be a challenge for contemporary society. Adolescents need real-life and tangible experience of the challenges of the united nature of humanity to learn and grow from (Malewitz, 2013). This theme is used in the first iteration curriculum to aid students to recognize and develop a richer view of this united aspect of human nature.

*The topic.* At the Catholic secondary school location of the study, the student body is expected to engage in community service hours, to have direct and indirect experiences of the life and experiences of outcast and fringe members of society. From August to April of the school year the freshmen students are expected to serve directly in the community for a specified number of hours of service. They are expected to document their experiences and throughout the year of theology classes have reflective sessions to discuss and share their services experiences.

To help the students reflect on the unitive nature of the human experiences, I have previously used the film *The Human Experience* (Kinnane, 2008/2011) as a conversation starter. Although the adolescents had the opportunity to serve in the community, through a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, food drive, or an opportunity to serve special populations, the young adolescent students usually do not have the language skills to discuss their emotions or fully comprehend their spiritual experiences in those times of service (Canales, 2011; Mercadante, 2012). Through the use of the film, the students are able to relate to the experiences of four friends who travel and live a week in three different situations: a) homeless on the streets of New York City; b) an orphanage in Lima, Peru; and c) a leper colony and villages ravaged by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ghana.



*The session implementation expectations.* The session was developed as a four-day classroom experience to include watching the film, *The Human Experience*, followed by a Socratic dialogue formed from open-ended reflection questions based on the film and the students' service experiences. The first three days would include watching the film and introduce the purpose of the activity. The final day would involve a Socratic dialogue regarding using and interweaving topics from the film as a springboard for the students to discuss and reflect upon their own experiences with individuals who are labeled as outcasts or often marginalized by society.

*The activity used for session implementation: Film.* For this activity it was necessary to have access to a copy of the film, *The Human Experience* (Kinnane, 2008/2011). One worksheet was created for this session. The worksheet offered a brief explanation of the purpose of the experience, as well as guiding questions that focused on the experience and actions of the characters of the film and how the students' experiences at the service organization related to the scenes of the film (See Appendix D.1).

*4S Understanding framework: harmony.* Using the 4S Understanding framework, this session lays a foundation of the concept of harmony; challenging the student-participants to reflect and define the concept within a real-life experience of their experience in community service, especially the inclusion of outcasts. The student-participants would watch the film, reflect on the themes of the film, and use that story as a springboard for personal reflections within a moderated group setting. The spirituality component of this session is embedded within the nature of the dignity of the human person, especially individuals labeled as outcasts. Figure 3.5 illustrates the multi-multifaceted aspects of this lesson within a 4S Understanding framework.

**Figure 3.5. Harmony: 4S Understanding framework**

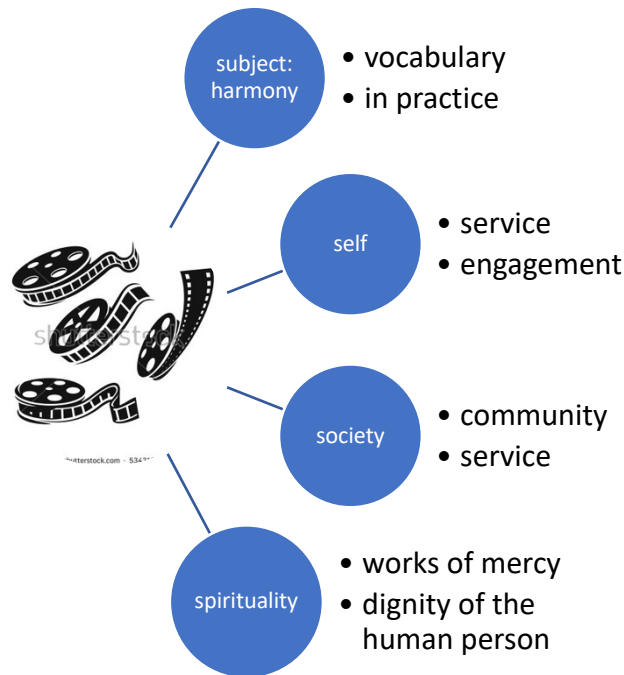


Figure 3.5. represents the 4S Understanding components of the session on harmony

Figure 3.5. represents the 4S Understanding components of the session on harmony: a) subject, where the student-participants are invited to dialogue about vocabulary terms and use the film as a springboard for reflection; b) self, where the student-participants are invited to reflect on their community service and engagement; c) society, where the student-participants are invited to reflect about their role in the community and how their service helped others; and d) spirituality, where the student-participants are invited to dialogue about the works of mercy and the inherent dignity within humanity.

### **Summary of the anticipated curriculum**

This first iterative curriculum, based on the themes of the writings of Thomas Merton was to serve as an expansive alternative to reductionistic anti-bullying programs used in Catholic secondary schools. It was postulated that the themes of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony and associated activities would have the students dialogue and explore the dignity of the human

person. The following chart, Table 3.6, offers a visual summary of the topics, activities, environment, and artifacts used in this study.

**Table 3.6. Overview of the anticipated curriculum implementation, topics, and activities**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activity/Activities</b>	<b>Theological Focused Theme(s)</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Artifacts Used</b>
<b>1</b>	order	Group game activity: Jenga survivor	Order; Collaboration; Communication	Guest Teacher or Researcher	PowerPoint file & Worksheet (Appendix A.1, A.2, A.3, A.4)
<b>2</b>	order	Small group reflection; large group Socratic dialogue	Recognizing dignity in the other	Researcher	Worksheet (Appendix A.5)
<b>3</b>	balance	Meditation (20 mins); individual reflection	Peace; healthy Balance; Self-discovery	Researcher	Worksheet (Appendix B.1)
<b>4</b>	balance	Free expression journal; large group reflection	Wholeness of self; Dignity of self	Researcher	Worksheet (Appendix B.2)
<b>5</b>	rhythm	Drum circle	Unity; Collaboration	Guest Teacher or Researcher	Hand drums
<b>6</b>	rhythm	Watch music videos; Individual reflection	Body of Christ imagery - All people have a specific role	Researcher	Worksheets (Appendix C.1 & C.2)
<b>7</b>	harmony	Watch the film: <i>The Human Experience</i>	Preferential option for the poor	Researcher	Film
<b>8</b>	harmony	Watch the film: <i>The Human Experience</i>	Preferential option for the poor	Researcher	Film
<b>9</b>	harmony	Watch the film: <i>The Human Experience</i>	Preferential option for the poor	Researcher	Film
<b>10</b>	harmony	Small group reflection; large group Socratic dialogue	All people have worth and dignity	Researcher	Worksheet (Appendix D.1)

## **Curriculum implementation**

Previously in this chapter, the themes and development of the first iterative curriculum were discussed. The implementation phase of the anticipated curriculum needed to be adapted due to schedule changes at the location of implementation and due to scheduling conflicts. As mentioned earlier in the study the topic sessions were not intended to follow a particular sequence but due to the changes in the school calendar that occurred, due to the rearrangement of snow days and the inclusion of an early dismissal day, the implementation of the one of the topics was split into two parts which was different than originally proposed previously in this chapter. The implementation of the curriculum followed the topics in the following progression: a) rhythm, part I; b) harmony; c) balance; d) order; and e) rhythm, part II.

**Adaptations to the first iterative curriculum.** When I researched and wrote the curriculum for the first iteration, I collaborated and included input and guidance from fellow educators and colleagues about the topic themes and implementation activities for the students, which occurred in the planning process of the curriculum. I was able to directly collaborate and weigh the suggestions of my four theology department colleagues, one colleague from the English/Literature department, and one colleague from the Fine-Arts department. There were also about fifty diocesan educators and administrators, from elementary and secondary settings, who were indirect contributors through verbal suggestions, session evaluations, and comments that have offered insights throughout various professional development sessions that I have led on the topics of Thomas Merton.

I desired to ask two educators to guest lecture particular sections of the first iteration curriculum and lead particular session activities that mirrored their strengths, specifically on the topic activities for the sessions on order and rhythm. Due to the school schedule availability one

guest educator, the band teacher, had very little availability and a rearrangement of the implementation activities had to adapt to his schedule. His activity regarding rhythm, the drum circle, was implemented first because of his availability. Following the remaining topics and activities, I decided to supplement the rhythm activity with three music video YouTube clips of collaborative musicians, to further illustrate and allow the students to reflect on topics of unification and collaboration which is illustrated through the need to be in concert with others for a piece of music to be produced well. Two of the YouTube clips used were from the band Walk Off the Earth. Walk Off the Earth is a band that consists of multiple musicians, usually between four and seven musicians, who are known for their choreographed visual of playing and switching various musical instruments throughout the course of their songs.

For the session of rhythm, part II to assist the student-participants experience the collaborative and communicative nature of rhythm in music I used Walk Off the Earth's music videos: a) Hey Ya! (Walk off the Earth, 2017b), a cover of the 2003 hit by Outkast and b) Shape of You (Walk off the Earth, 2017a), a cover of Ed Sheeran's 2017 hit. A third music video was also used for this activity as a comparison; it was an instrumental version of Hey Ya! (Candyrat Records, 2013) by the guitarists Don Ross and Calum Graham. The songs were selected because of their unique aspects of the use of rhythm and collaborative nature as well as the students' familiarity of the songs, Hey Ya! and Shape of You. Although most of the students involved in the study had previously participated in the drum circle, I thought that this substitution would allow the students who missed the drum circle the opportunity to experience how rhythm is needed in music and dialogue how collaboration exists in other environments.

**Implementation schedule.** Table 3.7 offers a sequence in which the first iteration curriculum activities were presented to the student participants. The drum circle activity, under the topic of

rhythm, and group game activity: Jenga survivor, under the topic of order, were scheduled based on the availability of the guest teachers that led those activities for the students.

**Table 3.7. Overview of the iterative curriculum implementation**

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activity/Activities</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Artifacts used</b>
1	Rhythm, Part I	Drum circle	Band room	Guest Teacher #1	
2	harmony	Watch: <i>The Human Experience</i>	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheet (D.1)
3	harmony	Watch: <i>The Human Experience</i>	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheet (D.1)
4	harmony	Large group Socratic dialogue	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheet (D.1)
5	Harmony/ balance	Watch: <i>Noise</i> ; Small group reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheet (D.1)
6	balance	Meditation (20 mins); individual reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheets (B.1/B.2)
7	balance	journal; large group reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheets (B.1/B.2); Personal Journals
8	order	Group game activity: Jenga survivor	Chapel	Guest teacher #2	Worksheet (A.4/A.5)
9	order	Small and large group reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheet (A.4/A.5)
10	Rhythm, Part II	Watch: music videos; Individual reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheets (C.1/ C.2)

**Summary of the curriculum implementation.** The implementation of the first iteration curriculum took place over a 10-day non-consecutive period. Most of the curriculum implementation sessions occurred over consecutive days; the exception was the separation of the

topics on rhythm, parts I and II. The implementation sessions were presented to the all of the students who were present on the day of the session over the course of the 10-day period.

## CHAPTER IV

### Methodology

Whatever you do, every act, however small, can teach you everything - provided you see who it is that is acting. (Merton, 1979, p. 14)

This study utilizes a qualitative research methodology, educational criticism and connoisseurship (Eisner, 1976; Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017), to research and explore trends from adolescent students' shared experiences regarding their thoughts, impressions, and beliefs upon human dignity, unity, and forces that lead to communal relationships, as a response to bullying. Educational criticism and connoisseurship is a qualitative research methodology that relies on clearly conveying the nuanced judgments and knowledge of the researcher to illuminate the complexities and offer a more complete context of an educational theory or practice.

Elliot Eisner (1933-2014) re-envisioned that reductionist views of assessment and inquiry were missing important qualities within the study and focus of pedagogical analysis. From a Fine Arts perspective of assessment and analysis, Eisner (1976) argued that appreciation of a subject is more complex than merely an emotional response; both an awareness and understanding of the experience of the subject is needed to analyze its worth and value. Eisner (1992) also stated that due to the complexity of the social nature of education and educational settings the researcher is demanded to make sense and interpret the world that encompasses an educational phenomenon. This perspective of research and analysis is not founded on an objective perspective reduced to one truth but exists in the expansive and complex nature of human communication and relationship. Within the context of an educational setting this

methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship would be established through the process of a rich description of an educational phenomenon, an interpretation of the phenomenon, and an appraisal of the context for meaning of the given phenomenon, which may or may not be interpreted differently by different critics and connoisseurs (Eisner, 1976; Eisner, 1993; Flinders & Eisner, 1994).

The educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology is founded on a four-stage process: description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics; as well as a two-prong approach to qualitative research and analysis, namely: a) the researcher serves as a role as a connoisseur, and b) the researcher serves a role as a critic for the audience for a subject (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). The four stages and two approaches of the educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology will be explained further in the following sections.

### **The Methodological Process**

There are four components of utilizing educational criticism and connoisseurship as a research methodology: description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Educational criticism and connoisseurship, as a methodology, derives its roots from the qualitative methodologies of ethnographical and case study research (Bresler, 1994). To offer a context of the culture and focus of study for the reader of an education phenomenon, a study using educational criticism and connoisseurship needs to provide a strong descriptive narrative for the reader to understand the phenomenon (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). A rich description of the educational phenomenon allows the reader to be able to understand the researcher's interpretation of the contextual phenomenon (Shenton, 2004). The evaluation stage allows the researcher to inform the reader and offer an appraisal of the educational phenomenon. Finally, the thematics stage allows the researcher to articulate patterns



and trends for future research. The four aspects of the methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship will now be explained in greater depth.

**Description.** Within the use of educational criticism and connoisseurship, the description becomes the foundation of the study (Bresler, 1994; Flinders & Eisner, 1994; Moroye, 2009; Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). The description of an educational phenomena serves two purposes: a) it provides evidence and b) it offers contextual meaning of the study's results. It is from a full, rich description that the reader is able to experience the context of the educational phenomena, without the opportunity of being present to phenomena itself. The researcher, through the description, recreates an account of the context for the reader to clearly follow the thought process, decisions, and interpretations of the researcher (Eisner, 1976; Flinders & Eisner, 1994). The rich, thick description establishes the living context of the data and data collection process, allowing the reader to understand the researcher and the researcher's point of view and creates cohesion and trustworthiness in the study (Shenton, 2004).

Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) state that the description does not just depict but needs to evoke visceral responses from the reader. A rich, thick description brings the data alive through the senses and emotion to draw the expansive and complex nature of a society to light. To enlighten the reader, strong descriptions for educational criticism and connoisseurship methodological study may be poetic in nature, using rhythm and pacing, tone and language to recreate the setting. This style can be unfamiliar or uncomfortable when contrasted to the objective and formal writing of standard scientific inquiry, but the style is a necessary component to create an authentic re-creation of the educational settings and the events of a living culture.

To capture the living culture for this study, I utilized audio-video recordings of the students' experiences of the activities in conjunction with observational fieldnotes. The observational fieldnotes offered the initial groundwork of the student responses while the audio-visual recordings captured a larger array of student dialogue, tone, movement, context of the scene for transcription, significant missing data from the fieldnotes, and further investigation for follow-up questions with students. The audio-visual recordings were recorded on an iPad. For certain activities like the Socratic dialogue, the iPad was in a stationary location which captured the students posture as well as their verbal responses; while during interactive group activities and discussions, like the Jenga game, the iPad circulated throughout the room to focus on individual group interaction, similar to a teacher assessing and surveying student-group activities.

**Interpretation.** Within the use of educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology, interpretation exists in close conjunction with the description stage (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Through the description the researcher establishes the context, the interpretation elicits meaning from the context. This interpretative stage should not be considered a cause-to-effect explanation. The interpretation is one of many perspectives offering insight into the studied phenomenon. The interpretive stage seeks to give order to the meanings that emerge from the descriptive data. For specific investigation of a phenomenon, the researcher can also use a lens to aid in the interpretation, or an interpretative frame, to offer specific meaning and context for the given data. Interpretive frames, or the interpretive lens, will be discussed further in this chapter when discussing the lens chosen by the researcher to use within this educational criticism and connoisseurship methodological study.

**Evaluation.** The third stage with a study using educational criticism and connoisseurship as methodology is the evaluation stage (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). The evaluation stage focuses specifically on the value of the given studied educational phenomenon. The value of a given educational phenomenon is not just assessed based on a pre-established standard but the significance a given phenomenon has within the complex nature of the educational setting.

While the description and interpretation stages may be closely interwoven, the evaluation stage emerges after the previous two stages. The value of this explorative study is grounded in the experiences of the students as well as what insights, in the form of themes, emerge from the data that relate to an alternative response to bullying, from a holistic perspective. The evaluation stage of this study explores the data to acknowledge if the students' received experience of the curriculum parallels or is similar to the intended curriculum. The emergent themes from the student data are analyzed in light of the recognition of the dignity of the human person in contrast to themes of stereotyping and isolation.

**Thematics.** The final stage of educational criticism and connoisseurship focuses on themes and trends, or thematics; where the researcher expresses any generalizability of the evaluation for further educational experiences (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). The thematics stage does not offer a prediction for future educational events but offers guidance for broader educational experiences.

The thematics stage of this study focuses on the aspects of the study that could offer insight into a response to bullying in Catholic or secular classroom environments. During this stage of the research, I specifically investigated which activities and themes were the most prominent and might offer guidance for future planning and curriculum implementation.

The role of the researcher serves as a conduit and interpreter for the data and inquiry explanation throughout the four-stage process. The researcher needs to be informative and offer beneficial clarity for future study or exploration in educational change with a depth of knowledge regarding the educational subject. As mentioned previously, the role of the researcher in a study using educational criticism and connoisseurship is divided into two roles: a) connoisseur and b) critic.

### **The Researcher's Role as Connoisseur and Critic**

A connoisseur is an expert of a particular subject who is able to make fine, nuanced distinctions between complex and subtle contextual qualities regarding that subject (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). A connoisseur has a deep and penetrating knowledge of the topic that he or she is able to acknowledge and recognize aspects of the topic that are not readily known or usually overlooked as trivial (Eisner, 1987). A connoisseur is defined by a rich internal comprehension of a particular topic (Eisner, 1976; Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017).

Within the methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship, the researcher as connoisseur needs to have a systematic, complex knowledge of the subject being studied; this complex understanding should be grounded on a full, deep pre-existing knowledge of the subject (Eisner, 1993). A connoisseur researcher using educational criticism and connoisseurship also needs to be able to distinguish the minute differences present in a context or experience that give that particular experience significance and value in comparison to the insignificant experiences. Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders (2017) stated that the strength of the connoisseurship as researcher depends on the ability to: a) discern, b) appreciate, and c) value a given phenomenon. Discernment, as regarded to educational research, refers to the ability to differentiate and notice

qualities present in the culture and social experiences within an educational setting.

Appreciation refers to the researcher knowing what to look for, through recognition and contextualization. Valuing refers to the researcher understanding the meaning of the context and why that meaning has importance. Although these three sources of connoisseurship: discernment, appreciation, and valuing put the researcher in the role of an expert on the subject, it is essential for the researcher to remain open-minded and expansive to learn further about the subject.

A critic is an individual who is able to judge and/or disclose what has been learned about a subject through past acquired knowledge (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). A helpful critic does not just explain a phenomenon but is able to offer a full context of that phenomenon through its relationship historically, how it occurred or evolved, from various perspectives, and in relationship to various similar concepts. A critic challenges the audience to approach a phenomenon beyond just the face value and experience its many facets, searching for deeper meaning and expansive approach to the phenomenon.

Within the methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship, the researcher as critic needs to have the ability to simply and concretely explain an education phenomenon (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). The critic must also be able to critique the phenomenon based on the positive and negative attributes, explaining clearly why these aspects are helpful or become a hindrance. The critic must offer a frame of reference for the educational phenomenon and guide the reader through a lens to a value judgment of the studied phenomenon.

Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) indicate that the term education might be too broad as a lens for criticism that a researcher may need to narrow the lens of their criticism for greater clarity in their study. Bresler (1994) and Eisner (1976; 1993; 2003a) used art as a lens

within educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology and scholarship. Moroye (2009) used the educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology through a critical ecological lens, to focus research on educational practices and their incorporation of ethical awareness of nature. With the interconnection between Merton, adolescent spirituality, and Catholic education as prominent themes throughout this study, the lens for this research methodology will utilize a critical lens based on theological education.

### **Theo-educational Criticism and Connoisseurship**

Theo-educational criticism and connoisseurship would be a focused educational connoisseurship methodology that uses and filters observations and interpretations through a lens that critically focuses on aspects of religious education and theological instruction within an educational experience. Theo-educational criticism and connoisseurship was developed and chosen for this study because of the nature of the content of the study; namely, the holistic nature and dignity of the human person derived from a Christian Humanist perspective (Hittinger, 2017; Merton, 1979). A theo-educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology would refer the exploration and analysis of experiences, vocabulary, ideas, and concepts that connect to the embedded nature of the theology within dialogue that emerges from the curriculum, such as the definition of the human person and their relationship in communication from a theological perspective (Francis, 2013; John Paul II, 1979). Due to the nature of this research which is based on the writings of Thomas Merton, adolescent spirituality, and Catholic education, this theo-educational criticism and connoisseurship lens would be from a particularly Roman Catholic perspective for this study.

**The Researcher.** As mentioned previously in this chapter, the researcher plays an essential and embedded role in educational criticism and connoisseurship research (Uhrmacher, Moroye, &

Flinders, 2017). Within the methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship the researcher serves as a connoisseur, an individual who has the ability to make fine nuanced distinctions between complex and subtle contextual qualities, as well as a critic, an interpreter or judge who discloses what has been learned about a subject through past acquired knowledge for an audience (Flinders & Eisner, 2009; Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). The researcher serves as an intermediary to explain, interpret, and illuminate all of the idiosyncrasies of the collected data.

In light of the honest, personal, and real-experienced context of the interpretive lens of the researcher, data, vignettes, and narratives of educational criticism and connoisseurship research will be presented in a first-person perspective, including a descriptive nature that will evoke a feeling, tone, and expression foreign to objective narrative style (Moroye, 2009; Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). This presentation style of writing is to offer a clear, cohesive, and consistent nature of the researcher's experience and interpretive lens. The following section will offer a short overview of the experience of the researcher of this study which serves to establish credibility as a connoisseur and critic of Catholic religious education. ***As connoisseur of Catholic religious education.*** For the sake of the reader and to establish my role as a connoisseur of Catholic religious education the following will serve as an introduction to my experiences, weaknesses and biases. I am a life-long Catholic who has been involved in religious education for over twenty years. I started as a catechist aide and parish religious educator, while I was a junior in high school and have continued to volunteer at the parish level with leading religious education courses. As a religious educator I have been involved with religious education at the elementary and secondary parish and school level, parish adult religious instruction, and undergraduate and graduate level courses in Theology.

After receiving my Bachelor's degree, I entered two years of Seminary formation while I was discerning the vocation to the Catholic priesthood. Although priesthood was not where I was called, I earned a second Bachelor's degree in philosophy and, as a lay student, completed a Master's degree in Theological Studies from two Midwestern Catholic seminaries. Continuing in that path of Catholic education I am now concluding my doctoral work at a Catholic University.

I am employed as a theology and philosophy educator for a Midwestern all-male Catholic secondary school and have eight years of classroom experience with Catholic secondary courses. I also have nine years of experience as a Catholic University adjunct, in both undergraduate and graduate capacities for courses in theology and religious education; in online and on-campus settings.

I enjoy learning about the complexities of faith, history, and Scripture and consider myself a life-long learner of theological studies. I have continued post-graduate studies specializing in Church History and Scripture. For the past five years, I have presented continuing education sessions on religious education at national and local Conferences as well as diocesan profession development workshops for catechetical leaders relating to adolescent religious education. I have also published articles on adolescent religious education and youth ministry practices in peer-reviewed and religious education practitioner journals and believe that the holistic teachings of the Catholic tradition can offer great insights into the dignity of the human person and self-discovery.

***As critic of Catholic religious education.*** I chose this topic not only from the demand and cultural need to address bullying in adolescents but personal experiences of remembering being bullied during elementary and through secondary educational years, as well as being involved in



the peer group bullying of others in my neighborhood situations. More recently, as an adult, I have seen and have been frustrated by the experiences of adolescent bullying present in my work environment but most pointedly in the lives of my children, at local junior and secondary Catholic schools. Without much success of changing the systematic approaches of Catholic elementary school bullying programs and reductionistic consequences, I decided to research adolescent experiences of bullying to draw more data to create dialogues for greater reform and systematic change in the future. After reading Thomas Merton, I feel that there are many opportunities to learn from Merton's spiritual themes and writings in contemporary society, one such opportunity might be to help address adolescent bullying.

### **Researcher Bias**

The trustworthiness of a study using educational criticism and connoisseurship as a methodology relies greatly on the ability of the researcher to be clear, coherent, consistent, and offer a complete context for the narrative (Shenton, 2004; Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Many scholars, specifically in quantitative inquiry, state that qualitative research is a less rigorous form of research and has questionable trustworthiness because of the amount of bias, or subjectivity, present from the interpretative nature and perspective of the researcher instead of an objective approach that is believed to be present in quantitative analysis (Eisner, 1992; Galdas, 2017). The nature of qualitative research cannot be explored or completed in isolation, and thus the researcher has a vital embedded role within the context of a qualitative phenomenon that is being studied (Eisner, 1992; Eisner, 2003a). The desire in trustworthiness as related to a qualitative researcher should not focus on how to remove or separate the researcher from the phenomenon, but rather how honest and transparent the researcher is about their role and clear and consistent their interpretation of the phenomenon is for the reader (Galdas, 2017).

To establish that transparent nature within the narrative and interpretation it is important to state any biases that the researcher needs to honestly address which might influence the researcher and their interpretation of the data (Shenton, 2004; Eisner, 2003a; Galdas, 2017). For this study it is important to remember that as a passionate Catholic educator my preference of a Catholic perspective of social justice and view of the worth of the dignity of the human person through a teleological ethic, such as Christian Humanism, is the perspective that I believe would be the best holistic approach to address bullying (Merton, 1979; Paul VI, 1965). A teleological ethic, evolving from the writings of Aristotle, is a philosophical perspective that focused on developing human virtues on a moral action that is based on a responsibility that leads to the good as an end goal (Palmer, 2013). As Merton's life was driven from a search for God and an incarnational faith which gave the sacred meaning and worth recognizing the dignity of every other human person (Moses, 2015), so too I as a researcher believe that there is inherent goodness in the other and a deep longing for God. I would echo the call of a Christian as stated by Merton:

In any event, whether or not the Christian submits to the discipline of non-violent resistance to force, he has a clear obligation to work for peace according to the measure of his ability. In so doing he is cooperating with Christ, the Prince of Peace, and living up to the demands of the Gospel. (Merton, 1966/1979, pg. 166).

In contrast other ethical philosophical perspectives state that human value may be of less importance in comparison to the societal structure, such as in utilitarian perspectives of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) or John Stuart Mill (1806-1973), which promotes the good of the state or community over the rights of the individual (Palmer, 2013; Pojman, 1998). Conversely, the voluntarist philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) or John Locke (1632-1704), promote the

free-will or right of the individual is of paramount importance compared to the good of the community (Palmer, 2013).

A second bias of this study is the focal use of the themes and works of Thomas Merton. Although I believe and have offered support that Thomas Merton's life and themes could be seen in parallel with adolescent spirituality and challenges, his writings and concepts may still be too complex and challenging to engage in the way I hope for the freshmen students. Although Merton seems to be a good fit thematically in my perspective as an educator, there may be other and better Catholic exemplars to use for an adolescent curriculum to respond to bullying.

Another bias of this study is that the student-participants in the study will be students of one of freshmen theology classes. It is important to acknowledge that there is an established relationship between the students and me, as their educator. It is also important to acknowledge that because of that relationship there is a power differential that exists between the characteristics of authority, as the educator and the students. To try to address this bias the quality of the students' engagement or lack of engagement of the curriculum will not have any bearing on their course grade. The worksheets and dialogic activities within study are not graded, and the students have the option to opt -out of any writing, dialogue, or activity if they chose without receiving a benefit or penalty. There are no assignment or participation points assigned to the materials used in this study. Students and parents who do not return a signed consent form will not be included in the analyzed material for the study but will not be penalized in any way. Even after the student signed the consent form, that student is free to submit or not submit any reflection assignment or participate or not participate in any activity. All freshmen students will experience the 10-day curriculum, though only the students and parents who signed the consent form will be included in the analysis stage of the study.

Though these biases may be a consideration of this study, I hope that the information that emerges out of the thoughts and writings of the students will offer insight to explore their interpretations of the experience and give insight into future researcher regarding positive approaches to address dignity of the human person in light of the effects of bullying.

### **Central Questions**

To research the nature of adolescent students in an all-male Catholic school environment and their engagement with a curriculum alternative responding to bullying behavior, based on the ethical lens of Christian Humanism, the following will serve as the central questions for this study:

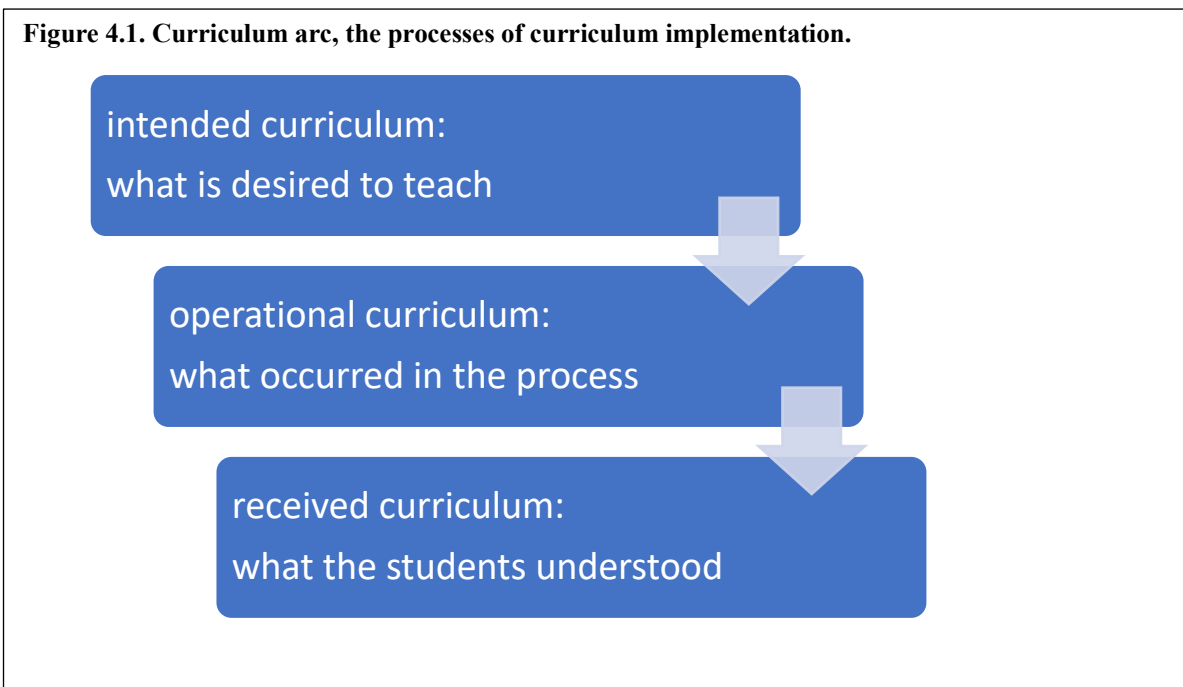
1. How do adolescent students engage in the aesthetic experience of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes of Thomas Merton's writings?

2. How do adolescent students interpret and share their experiences of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes of Thomas Merton's writings?

These questions developed from my desire as an educator to explore a new approach to responding to the epidemic of adolescent bullying. After reading several writings of Thomas Merton, I felt that his life and thematic writings paralleled the life and challenges of adolescence, such as self-discovery, passion, and advocacy (Dean, 2010). The holistic perspective of the human person emerged from the themes of my reading of Catholic moral and theological documents as well as my understanding of Christian Humanism, especially in the writing of Thomas Merton (Francis, 2013; Merton, 1979; Paul VI, 1965). With the intent that this curriculum is a first iteration and explorative in nature, I wanted the research question to interpret

and explore the experience and reactions of the students to this curricular dialogue and approach to dignity and community.

These research questions were specifically designed not to be a pre-/post- conclusive hypothesis, but expansive and allow the student dialogue to emerge and offer insight for further research and perspectives. A theo-educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology allowed for an expansive lens in this explorative educational study. Educational criticism and connoisseurship recognizes the complexity in the social setting of an educational environment and the multi-variable dimension of the educational experience (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). The following Figure 4.1 refers to the complexity of the processes of curriculum implementation: a) the intended curriculum, or what is desired by the educator, b) the operational curriculum, or what actually occurs during the implementation, and c) the received curriculum, what the students understood from the curriculum implementation.



The research questions for this study focus on the topics of the operational curriculum and received curriculum aspects of curriculum implementation. The first research question focuses

on the operational curriculum aspect, where I will be analyzing the data for how, and in what manner, the students engage the curricular activities and reflections that indicate disequilibrium in the mindset of the students; while the second research question focuses on the shared and interpretive responses of the students, to analyze what they understood from the curricular activities and reflections. Based on Delta Theory (Tharp, 2012) the emergent themes from the received curriculum stage would indicate movement in the mindset of the students from change from the disequilibrium stage to systematic change. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, there is no pre-/post-test group, but I will analyze the emerging trends that were present in the 10-day experience of the curriculum, from a theo-educational perspective that is aware of disequilibrium present in the personal writing, discussions, and posture of the students.

### **Participant selection**

23 freshmen students, identified as academically as honor level, from an all-male Mid-West urban Catholic school, St. Peter Faber High School, were invited to participate in the study. Theology is a mandatory course at the Catholic school, so there were a variety of students of different religious belief present in the class. I did not inquire or record their individual beliefs as data within the study because it was not pertinent to my research questions. Out of the initial 23 students, 16 students returned the completed consent form (See Appendix E.2), with parental consent, to participate in the study. The first-iteration curriculum was implemented over the course of 10 non-consecutive school days. Due to the school schedule, the theology class periods during the implementation ranged from 30 minutes to 45 minutes long; where only one of the ten class periods had to be shortened to a 30-minute period instead of 45 minutes in length, which will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Every year, St. Peter Faber High School, has a mandatory anti-bullying program for freshmen theology students entering into Catholic-school cultural expectations. The current anti-bullying program used at St. Peter Faber is comprised of a pre-recorded video conversation created by school guidance counselors, which includes an embedded Ted Talk on suicide and bullying. The anti-bullying program lasts about 1.5 hours. It is a passive activity which does not include a follow-up program or theological reflection over the presented material. In previous years, St. Peter Faber High School has offered as much as a 2-day anti-bully curriculum with short self-answered reflection questions, but there was no follow-up with students regarding the material and no connection with the theology curriculum. Neither of the past types of anti-bullying programs included a grade associated for the students. In light of that history, this first-iteration 10-day curriculum study would not include a grade for the students participating in the study.

The population for this study is not random. Although a random sample is often thought of as a gold standard for objective quantitative research, it is not practical for rigor and trustworthiness in educational criticism and connoisseurship qualitative research (Eisner, 1992; Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Eisner (1992) stated that the researcher's judgment on the subject is always a factor in the decision-making process of scientific inquiry, true objectivity of a subject is not possible with the involvement of human interpretation and bias. Secondly, the trustworthiness for an educational criticism and connoisseurship study is founded on the clarity and consistency of the narrative and descriptive data (Flinders & Eisner, 1994; Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017).

As the researcher, I chose to implement the first-iteration curriculum within a freshmen theology class that I was in the process of teaching. The choice to have the observational

research conducted in one of my theology courses was because of the following factors: (a) the trustworthiness and accurate analysis of a qualitative study data relies upon the depth and saturation of the researcher in the environment and culture of the group being observed (Galdas, 2017; Shenton, 2004); (b) a 4S Understanding curriculum implementation is based on the input and corroboration of teachers and students who will assist in the evolution of the curriculum expectations and understandings for future iterations; (c) due to the school scheduling limitations, as a researcher I would be unable to conduct a 10-day curriculum in another classroom without jeopardizing the continuity and integrity of the courses taught throughout the semester; and (d) the topic of the first-iterative curriculum itself parallels the curriculum concepts taught in the theology courses, as indicated by the framework of the USCCB curriculum (*Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, 2008).

The curriculum for the freshmen course follows the framework established by the USCCB (*Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, 2008). The material and conversational reflections of the first-iteration curriculum are similar to the current curriculum. Topics such as: human dignity, unity, and theological concepts such as the Body of Christ and sacrifice are included in the second semester of the freshman theology course. The themes within the first iteration curriculum parallel the topics of unity and dignity of the human person.

### **Ethics**

The risks of this study upon the students were not foreseeably any greater than typical activities and reflections of any other theology class. St. Peter Faber High School has guidance counselors and a school chaplain available to discuss psychological or spiritual questions and



concerns if the needed arose. These positions, guidance counselors and chaplain, are a normal facet of the school and are available to any student throughout the day, they were not just on site for the sake of this study.

To ensure the confidentiality of the student-participants and school location where the study occurred, any identification has been redacted or replaced with a pseudonym for narrative purposes. As stated in the student/parent consent form all identifying names were removed from artifacts and recordings after the materials were sorted and labeled by the researcher. The researcher transcribed all of the audio/visual recordings. After the transcription process was finished, the recorded media was deleted/erased, as stated in the parental/student consent form.

### **Data Collection**

The data for this study was collected through the following types of artifacts: a) written responses from the students' reflections/journaling on each of the session activities, b) transcriptions of video recording of the students' oral dialogue of the experiences and subsequent personal reflections, and c) observational fieldnotes by the researcher. The use of multiple modes of data collection was chosen to help triangulate the data and corroborate themes between the multiple data forms (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017).

The research questions for this study are centered on exploring the engagement and interpretation of the student experiences of the curriculum, to do this effectively it is important for the students' actions and language be the primary mode of data collection. As mentioned previously, even after a student signed the consent form, the student had the choice to engage or not engage in any of the curriculum activities or reflection questions. Some students decided to choose to participate and submit certain worksheet reflections as artifacts while other students chose not to submit those questions. At the beginning of the study, I assured the students that

they had the option, even if they consented to participate in the study, to submit or not submit materials throughout the curriculum implementation the sessions. To respect their choice and consent, I did not follow-up with students who chose not to submit materials for particular sessions. Although this accounts for some of the numerical discrepancies in the data, some of the other discrepancy in data is also attributed to student absences due to illness or field trips. Students who were absent did not submit an artifact for the missed section. Although the focus of the research questions was on overall student experiences of the curriculum, not following up with all of the individual student experiences of the sessions could be considered a limitation to the data within the study.

The following sections will outline the three forms of data collection; or each section will explain the type of data collected and the specific ways the data was collected. Finally, this section will offer Table 4.4 as a visual overview of the data collection.

**Artifacts.** The collection of artifacts for a study offers concrete data through first-hand accounts in the very words and language of the participants (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). The collection of written artifacts was used so that student-participants who might be more introverted have the opportunity to contribute their experiences without the pressure to share within a small or large group discussion. Throughout the implementation of the curriculum, I created worksheets, copied front and back, for each of the four thematic topics of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony (See Appendices A.4/A.5; B.1/B.2; C.1/C.2; D.1). Each of these worksheets contained open-ended questions that were designed to be expansive conversation starters and allow the student-participants to dialogue but not constrain the student-participants' natural experience and expression of the session topic. Each student received a copy of the worksheet on the first day of the implementation of the topic session and was able to use the

worksheet for notes and thought processing throughout the course of the session topic. Depending on the session, students would have time to 15 to 20 minutes to silently reflect on the questions on the worksheet, discuss questions in small groups for 3 or 4 peers, or dialogue about the questions in large groups, with the invitation to jot down notes or well thought out answers to about the session topic. At the conclusion of the topic session, the student-participants were invited to turn in their worksheet to be used as artifacts for that session. Table 4.2 offers a summary of the collected artifacts used in the study.

**Table 4.2. Overview of the collected artifacts.**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Type of Artifacts collected</b>	<b>Number of artifacts</b>	<b>Number of students present &amp; consented</b>
Harmony	Worksheet (Appendix D.1)	11	16
Balance	Worksheet (Appendices B.1/B.2)	16	16
Balance	Regular lined-paper (personal journal)	13	13
Order	Worksheet (Appendices A.4/A.5)	16	16
Rhythm	Worksheet (Appendices C.1/C.2)	15	15

Throughout the implementation there was a total of 71 unique artifacts collected, most of which contained information written by the student-participant on both sides of the worksheets. These worksheets had varying degrees of length of writings from a few single line answers to complete pages of essay reflections responding to the guiding questions, responses to the group dialogues,

or just personal notes on the session topic. The range of engagement and quality of student responses to the artifacts will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

**Audio/video recording and transcriptions.** Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) state that an educational criticism and connoisseurship study depends on rich, sponge-like observations. Recognizing that I would be administering most of the sessions during this implementation, I realized I would not be able to create enough observational fieldnotes of student behavior that would be useful for the study and would need to rely on the aid of audio and video recordings to view and transcribe from for a more complete observation for the study. Transcriptions of multi-media recordings are necessary for the researcher to collect valuable data unavailable to the researcher in fieldnotes at the time of the activity's original occurrence (Creswell, 2013). A video recording transcription offers more than words and language but can also offer tone, body language, engagement of students for thick and rich data description for the qualitative method of educational criticism and connoisseurship research (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). St. Peter Faber High School has been utilizing video recordings for teacher classroom observations through the use of a mounted iPad camera and the presence of such technology would not seem abnormal from a student perspective in the classroom experience of the study environment.

Throughout this study, the guiding questions focused on the shared and interpretative experiences of the student-participants of the curriculum. With this in mind, I chose to use video recordings to help capture those aspects of the student-participant experiences I would miss from fieldnotes alone. These recordings also helped as a recorded cross-reference to the written experiences of the students during oral dialoguing. Table 4.3 offers a summary of the

implementation activities and audio-visual recordings collected during those sessions for this study.

**Table 4.3. Overview of activities and audio-visual recordings.**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>A/V recording time (mins.)</b>	<b>Arrangement during class session</b>
Harmony	Socratic dialogue	34:58	After small group reflection; until the conclusion of period
Balance	Large group reflection on <i>Noise</i>	9:48	After short film; conclusion of period
Balance	Large group reflection on personal journaling	10:30	After silent journaling; until end of period
Order	Jenga group activity	44:09	Complete period
Order	Small and large group reflection on group activity	20:50	After small group reflection; until end of period
Rhythm	Drum circle	37:05	Complete period
Rhythm	Large group discussion on music videos & drum circle	7:05	Conclusion of period

A total of 2 hours and 37 minutes of recorded student dialogue and activity was collected and transcribed for this study. I decided to personally transcribe the 2 hours and 37 minutes of recorded data. Throughout the transcription process, I separated out the audio comments by

individual students, labeling them by their initials, as well as making notes of observational data of student posture and tone seen in the context of the video feed. Unfortunately, during the Socratic dialogue on harmony, due to the size of the circle and the classroom, not all of the students were within the video frame of the camera. On that file, the audio was present, but I was unable to account for the posture of roughly five students. As was stated in the consent form and IRB submission, after the transcription of the data the video recording files were erased to ensure student confidentiality.

**Observations and fieldnotes.** A strong qualitative study depends on the ability to have data that is rooted in the experience (Creswell, 2009). Fieldnotes allow the researcher/observer to jot and record comments about a phenomenon in real time (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Fieldnotes can offer contextual insight and commentary to participant tone, posture, engagement, phrasing, and style of language (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Fieldnotes can also offer essential nuance details from the perspective of the connoisseur that made be missed or not understood by the participants alone.

I jotted down fieldnotes throughout the course of the implementation as much as possible. For the sessions that I had a guest teacher present, during the drum circle and Jenga group activities it was possible to have more thorough field notes without taking attention away from the students' work, but within the sessions I presented trying to take thorough fieldnotes was more of a challenge without disturbing the students during a dialogue. To supplement the fieldnotes I would return in the evening to watch and listen to the recorded files and jot down notes that I missed during the experience earlier in the day during the implementation. Many of these fieldnotes and note clarifications became important cues for sections in the student dialogue or transcriptions to refer to during the coding process.

**Follow-up clarifications.** Although primary data was collected through the modes of artifacts and audio/visual recordings and transcriptions, there were times when I needed to approach a student-participant to be a little more specific or clear in their recorded or written responses. To find the clarification on specific terms, sarcastic phrases, actions, or answers with multiple possible meanings I went to particular students for follow-up clarifications. These follow-ups were in the form of quick moments with the student before or after class and would occur within a day or two after a given activity or collection of artifacts from the curriculum implementation. The one or two-day timeframe would give me time for an initial read-through of the artifacts or listen to the recording for specific words or phrases that were unclear or distorted in the audio recording. Within the quick timeframe, the student-participants were also clear in clarifying the context of their words, phrases, or actions. There was one student, in particular, where the context of the dialogue and recording was so soft on the recording that that particular student-participant was unable to clarify my questions on that particular section of the Socratic dialogue.

Through the use of the data collection forms of artifacts, audio/video recordings of sessions, and fieldnotes, consistent themes of the participant experiences emerged from multiple forms. I also purposefully chose multiple data collection forms because of the recognition of the multiple learning styles of students, namely that some student-participants are more extroverted in their abilities to share experiences, while some students are more introverted and express their thoughts better individually through writing. The following Figure 4.4 offers a comprehensive visual summary of the data collection throughout the study.

**Table 4.4. Overview of the curriculum topics and primary data collection**

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activity/Activities</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Data collected</b>
45 mins	Rhythm, Part I	Drum circle	Band room or Chapel	Guest Teacher #1	A/V recording (37.05); Observations/fieldnotes
45 mins	harmony	Watch: <i>The Human Experience</i>	Classroom	Researcher	Observations
45 mins	harmony	Watch: <i>The Human Experience</i>	Classroom	Researcher	Observations
45 mins	harmony	Large group Socratic dialogue	Classroom	Researcher	A/V recording (34.58); Observations/fieldnotes
45 mins	Harmony/balance	Watch: <i>Noise</i> ; Small group reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheet (D.1) - 11; A/V recording (9.48); Observations/fieldnotes
30 mins	balance	Meditation (20 mins); individual reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Observations/fieldnotes
45 mins	balance	journal; large group reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheets (B.1/B.2) - 16; Personal Journals - 13; A/V recording (10.30);
45 mins	order	Group game activity: Jenga survivor	Chapel	Guest teacher #2	A/V recording (44.09); Observations/fieldnotes
45 mins	order	Small and large group reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheet (A.4/A.5) - 16; A/V recording (20.50); Observations/fieldnotes
45 mins	Rhythm, Part II	Watch: music videos; Individual reflection	Classroom	Researcher	Worksheets (C.1 & C.2) - 15; A/V recording (7.05)

### **Data Analysis**

Flinders and Eisner (1994) state that a qualitative analysis using educational criticism should base the thematic inquiry in educational phenomenon on a frame of reference. For this study, which will use a theological lens, the thematic inquiry will pay particular focus on theological themes throughout the narrative and artifacts. As mentioned earlier, the stages of



educational criticism and connoisseurship is based on description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics. To analyze the data, I followed the four stages of educational criticism and connoisseurship, in light of Delta Theory (Tharp, 2012). Delta Theory posits that change occurs when an individual group can be moved from a consistent ideology through disequilibrium to a systematic change.

To establish a description of the sessions, I first sorted the collected data artifacts and all transcriptions of the recordings by date. I put the composite data collection (e.g. fieldnotes, artifacts, and recorded transcriptions) in a three-ring binder, separating the implementation date by dividers. Each divided implementation date section began with the fieldnotes, then the artifacts ordered sequentially by the surname of the student-participant, and finally included the transcriptions from that session date at the end of the section. I also created and included narrative descriptions of the activities based on the observational fieldnotes and recordings to give a cohesive whole context for the activities and the data.

With all of the data in an ordered fashion, I began to read through and interpret the data through the use of coding and data annotations. Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) state that coding offers a first step toward analysis within educational criticism and connoisseurship, but the educational critic may seek information beyond basic coding and theme labeling. An educational critic may also use a liberal arts perspective of appraisal called annotating to explore the relationships between the complete picture, instead of merely identifying themes or phrases alone. Saldaña (2011) offered multiple avenues for coding qualitative data.

In light of Delta Theory (Tharp, 2012), the data coding and analysis was predicated on emerging terms, phrases, values, and beliefs from the students' reflections that indicated disequilibrium from a previous perspective to a new perspective illustrated through the context

of their dialogues and reflective writings. I started the data analysis with several rounds of coding looking first for emerging words, terms, and short phrases as a basis. My first round of coding was to read through and process the complete collection of data, line by line, making marginal notes and personal memos from the words that frequently emerge from the data, by focusing the coding on one thematic session at a time. Table 4.5 offers an example of the emergent themes from term coding.

**Table 4.5. Overview of term coding.**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Emerging Terms</b>
Harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace</li> <li>• Dignity/respect</li> <li>• Together/oneness/unison</li> <li>• Understand the other (on a deeper level)</li> <li>• Common ground</li> </ul>
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncomfortable/anxious (silence/meditation)</li> <li>• Unknown (silence)</li> <li>• Peaceful/calm (meditation)</li> <li>• Safe (meditation)</li> <li>• Relaxed/stress reliever/rested/ (meditation)</li> <li>• Challenging (meditation)</li> <li>• Needed (meditation)</li> </ul>
Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work together/teamwork</li> <li>• Everyone has a part to play</li> <li>• Positive communication/dialogue</li> <li>• Creativity/open-mindedness</li> <li>• Strategize/think before acting</li> <li>• Rules/expectations/organize</li> </ul>
Rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone has a part to play</li> <li>• Listen/watch/rely on the other</li> <li>• Together/oneness/unison</li> <li>• A natural thing/found in nature/found in life</li> </ul>

I then utilized values coding (Saldaña, 2011), where the values and beliefs of the student-participants were identified by frequency and similarity. These values and beliefs were identified by using a system that included: (A) attitude, (B) belief, and (V) value in the margins

of the data; I also found that using color-coded .5 inch Post-It colored flags to denote the pages where the (A) attitude - red, (B) belief - green, and (V) value – blue comments emerged in the student data was invaluable. These themes emerged based on the context of disequilibrium that was illustrated in the writing or dialogue of the student; for example, a student may have answered in a class discussion slowly, cautiously attempting to reason out their thought process but the tone changed to a fast, excited exclamation when that student came to a new conclusion about the topic. In the writing reflections, an example of disequilibrium is present when a student includes a particular punctuation, or uses capitalizes all of the letters of a word, to illustrate a new thought or illuminating revelation about the topic. Table 4.6 offers an example of the emergent themes from values coding.

**Table 4.6. Overview of values coding.**

Topic	Emerging Values
Harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B: All humans deserve dignity/respect</li> <li>• A: Having gratefulness of friends, family, life...</li> <li>• B &amp; V (positive): Everyone has a story</li> <li>• A: Need to understand others, on a deeper level</li> <li>• V (positive): Establishing common ground with others</li> <li>• B: Others shouldn't be judged on their past/circumstances</li> <li>• B &amp; V (positive): Everybody's good</li> </ul>
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• V (negative): Silence is uncomfortable/creates anxiety</li> <li>• V (negative): Silence represents the unknown</li> <li>• V (negative): Agitated from silence to noise</li> <li>• B &amp; V (positive): Meditation is peaceful/calm</li> <li>• B: Meditation creates a safe place for body/mind</li> <li>• B: Meditation relieves stress/is relaxing</li> <li>• V (positive &amp; negative): Meditation is challenging</li> <li>• A: Meditation is needed in fast-paced culture; stills the body/mind; need time to step back and think</li> </ul>
Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B: Everyone needs to work together to succeed</li> <li>• B: Everyone has a part to play in a community</li> <li>• V (positive): Positive communication/dialogue is necessary for healthy relationships</li> <li>• V (positive): Creativity/open-mindedness strengthens group dynamics</li> <li>• B: It is important to strategize/think before acting</li> <li>• V (positive): Rules/expectations/organize are necessary for structure</li> </ul>
Rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B: Everyone has a part to play in the song</li> <li>• A &amp; V (positive): It is important to listen/watch/rely on others in your team/band/society</li> <li>• B: Together/oneness/unison is important for success</li> <li>• A: Rhythm is a natural thing/found in nature/found in life</li> </ul>

Saldaña (2011) also suggested that dramaturgical coding could be beneficial for narrative inquiry and research with group interaction. I decided that the dramaturgical coding method

would be useful for emerging phrases and themes of how the student-participants viewed their life and actions in relationship with others, especially views that illustrate a disequilibrium. To separate the dramaturgical coding themes, I used different colored highlighters to separate out the emerging themes, based on disequilibrium in the context, as well as created marginal notes of the student data and personal memos. I used the following codes to identify the emerging dramaturgical themes: (ATT) attitudes, (CON) conflict/change in attitude, (EMO) emotions, (OBJ) objectives, and the (TAC) tactics students described to reach their objectives in the margins of the data. Table 4.7 offers a visual example of emergent dramaturgical themes.

**Table 4.7. Overview of dramaturgical coding.**

Topic	Emerging Dramaturgical Themes
Harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ATT: Fortunate of my gifts, life, family...</li> <li>• TAC: Establish common ground with others</li> <li>• ATT: Everyone deserves love and respect</li> <li>• ATT: Everybody's good, everybody's the same</li> <li>• CON: I learned homeless people are the same as everyone else, just without a home</li> </ul>
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMO: Silence is uncomfortable</li> <li>• EMO: I felt peaceful/safe/rested/relaxed</li> <li>• OBJ: I want to do something to help others/make the world a better place/make a difference in the world</li> <li>• CON: Happiness isn't found in material stuff</li> <li>• ATT: Take more time to analyze my own thoughts</li> <li>• CON: Everyone has a past/obstacles in their life</li> <li>• OBJ: I've got to let go of what's holding me back</li> </ul>
Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OBJ: succeed together on a goal (teamwork)</li> <li>• CON: We didn't communicate well together</li> <li>• EMO: Some people thought they are better than everyone else</li> <li>• TAC: It is important to communicate/build relationships with others</li> <li>• TAC: Listen to everyone's perspective then act</li> </ul>
Rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ATT: Everyone is part of the team/community</li> <li>• TAC: Listen/be aware of others</li> <li>• EMO: <i>fist bump</i> – succeeding in keeping rhythm</li> <li>• OBJ: Being part of something greater than one's self</li> </ul>

Throughout the transcription and coding process of the data, thematic similarities and patterns emerged from the conversations and writings. To illustrate the emerging themes, the first stage of the educational criticism and connoisseurship, description, narrative vignettes are used to offer insight into the education critical perspective of the curriculum. Interwoven with the descriptive stage, a theological interpretation of the data is explored and explained to offer context of the student-participants' experiences in light of Catholic educational standards. The evaluation and thematic sections of the methodology are comprised of exploring the operational and received curriculum, based on the students' experience, as a discussion for future iterations of the curriculum for secondary Catholic schools, and what trends might offer insight for a secular adaptation of the curriculum.

### **Creditability and Limitations**

Instead of using the common qualitative term of validity in the study, educational criticism and connoisseurship is founded on trustworthiness based upon: a) consensual validation; and b) referential adequacy (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Consensual validation refers to the ability to have the reader logically understand and recognize the experience of the contextual situation described through the narrative of the researcher. This recognition and acknowledgment of the experience on the part of the reader is critically dependent on clear, consistent, and coherent narratives. To establish a clear, consistent, and coherent narrative, a researcher must triangulate data from multiple sources and perspectives to have a more holistic view of the context such as: field or journal notes, transcriptions, and direct observational research.

The second condition of trustworthiness is referential adequacy, which refers to member checking and clarification that the data is correctly collected (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders,

2017). Referential adequacy is established through checking the reliability of the data in concert to other reliable educational sources. Referential adequacy could include clarifications through informal interviews, artifacts, recordings, or comparisons to a local or global scholarly body in the subject. The data from an educational criticism and connoisseurship study does not establish one definitive truth of the narrative experience, based on the data given by the researcher, but offers one guide or lens to interpret the experience, from the perspective of a connoisseur of the subject, and through that connoisseur's interpretation the reader can judge the data against historical or contemporary educational trends.

### **Summary**

This qualitative study explores students' experiences of a first-iteration Catholic High School curriculum created as a response to bullying, based on the writings of Thomas Merton. This curriculum response to bullying is unique to common anti-bullying programs because it is based upon a positive response to bullying behavior by focusing on the roots that lead to bullying such as stigma, division, and objectification, from positive experiences of unity, healthy communal relationships. This curriculum introduces students to the concept of human dignity, the dignity of the other, and the necessity of unity in community life and social justice. The writings of Thomas Merton were chosen as the foundational framework because of his perspective of non-violence, advocacy for the dignity of the human person, and the search for the authentic self (Merton, 1980; Merton, 1983; Merton, 2015). Through the themes and writings of Thomas Merton, the participants would have an opportunity to discuss their understanding of the dignity of the human person, how the effects of stigmas and labeling effect that dignity, and ultimately the need for community instead of divisive contextualizing. By examining these

theological concepts, it is posited that adolescents will illustrate a new perspective and respect of others when they examine their beliefs and recognize the dignity in others.

The content for this first-iteration curriculum is in alignment with the current standards for a theology course as set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the governing body of Catholic education (*Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, 2008). Along with the current curriculum standards, students will be invited to engage in activities that will explore topics to reflect and respond to the course material and connected course activities. Specifically, for this first-iteration curriculum activities would include: a) watching and reflecting on parts of a film, *The Human Experience*, which explores human dignity and life circumstances of homelessness in New York, AIDS victims and lepers in Ghana, and an orphanage in Peru; b) engaging in a dialogue and reflection on their personal experiences of community service (which is part of the requirements of freshmen year theology); c) engage and reflect on a mindfulness meditation experience; and d) engage and reflect on the unitive nature of a group drumming experience. As with typical theology coursework expectations the participants will engage in activities with personal and group reflections.

As a researcher using a theo-educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology, it is important to pay attention to emerging themes and creating holistic annotations of oral, tone, action, emotion, physical, and spiritual responses in the experiences of adolescents to the first-iteration curriculum that apply to the concepts of unity, dignity of the human person, and communal relationship. This lens was chosen because it parallels the contextual perspective of Thomas Merton's writings and themes. Through the coding of terms, values, and dramaturgical themes the data yielded insights into the students' experiences. Theological themes of the



dignity of the human person, the need for healthy communication, and recognition that happiness is greater than material things indicated that the students experienced topics that had them think deeply and challenge previous assumptions about the worth of humanity.

## CHAPTER V

### Findings

We who are poets know that the reason for a poem is not discovered until the poem itself exists. The reason for a living act is realized only in the act itself... We believe that our future will be made by love and hope, not by violence or calculation. The Spirit of Life that has brought us together, whether in space or only in agreement, will make our encounter an epiphany of certainties we could not know in isolation (Merton, 1964b/1966, pp. 155-156)

In a message addressed to an international gathering of poets, Thomas Merton wrote that an act or event only finds meaning through its lived experience in concert with a community.

Likewise, qualitative research and data only sheds light and meaning of an event through rich description and interpretation of a lived experience within its context (Creswell, 2013; Shenton, 2004). The methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship is predicated on the use of full rich descriptions to offer a clear context as well as coherence and consistency in the narrative for the reader (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). To establish and offer a consistent perspective for clarity and continuity in the findings from the interpretation and engagement of the student-participants I will structure this chapter by presenting the data thematically, in an order similar to the implementation for the students; namely the themes of: harmony, balance, order, and rhythm, parts I and part II. Each of the sections will explore the student-participants' experiences in three parts, which will interweave the first two stages of the educational criticism

and connoisseurship methodology within the student vignettes: a) description, b) student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences, and c) interpretation: emergent themes. After each of the four topics: harmony, balance, order, and rhythm, parts I and part II are explored, the emerging themes from the curriculum as a whole will be discussed. This chapter will then conclude with the final two stages of the educational criticism and connoisseurship methodology, evaluation and thematics. Due to the nature of educational criticism and connoisseurship, although the evaluation and thematics sections would customarily fall within a discussion chapter, the nature of the methodology warrants their inclusion together for better explorative nature and narrative continuity.

### **Overview**

The purpose of this study was to research two central questions: 1) how do adolescent students engage in the aesthetic experience of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes and writings of Thomas Merton?; and 2) how do adolescent students interpret and share their experiences of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes and writings of Thomas Merton? Throughout this chapter I will present data that corresponds with the central questions.

Evidence of central question one: how do adolescent students engage in the aesthetic experience of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes and writings of Thomas Merton? will be offered through vignettes and data from collected artifacts and transcriptions, presented in the description and student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences sections. Axelson and Flick (2010) defined engagement as the involvement of students in the learning process. The

following sections of this chapter will present data of student involvement with the curriculum activities as evidence of engagement. Each section will also contain evidence through shared interpretive experiences of the students' dialogue and written artifacts.

Evidence of central question two: how do adolescent students interpret and share their experiences of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes and writings of Thomas Merton? will be offered through the third section, which explains the emergent themes from the data. As Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) reiterate, when a curriculum is implemented what the educator, or curriculum designer, intends to convey through the material is not always received or understood by the student-learners. This study was designed to explore how the student-participants engaged, shared, and interpreted their experiences of a first-iterative curriculum. To that end, I will present short narrative vignettes, which will include data comprised of the student-participants' oral and written shared responses that offer insight into a theo-education critical perspective of the students' interpretation to the curriculum.

Student-participants will be referenced throughout the narrative vignettes of this chapter through the use of a pseudonym. Each student was assigned a unique pseudonym by the researcher. This identification was used to preserve the anonymity of the participants and will offer consistency throughout the narratives for the reader. Student responses will be presented verbatim from their written or oral transcriptions, any misspelling or hesitation in their answer will be included as-is by the researcher to preserve the integrity of the data and authenticity of the student-participant engagement with the curriculum. To offer a rich context, the student data will be supplemented with a description of tone or expression of the student's dialogue as it was

originally presented during the implementation; this contextual data will be contained in brackets to denote the tone or vocal expression of the student during the given activity.

## **Harmony**

Canales (2011) and Dean (2010) state that it is important for adolescents to have the opportunity to reflect on service experiences through a real-life context and with language that can help them articulate and claim their own experiences. The focal activity regarding the theme of harmony was the student dialogue that explored the themes from the film *The Human Experience* (Kinnane, 2008/2011) as well as the students' own experiences in their community service projects during their freshmen school year. *The Human Experience* was used to create a context for a conversation about establishing community with individuals and groups stigmatized by poverty or illness. The 4S Understanding framework connected the topic, through vocabulary, to self-discovery and community service to the greater society, and a spiritual ethic of the value and worth of all humanity. The worksheet (Appendix D.1) contained open-ended questions to assist the students to engage and share their interpretations of their experiences. Although the questions from the worksheet began with the students' thoughts and interpretations of the film, the later questions challenged the student-participants to think about their community service experiences and their thoughts and feelings about the people they met and served.

**Description.** Evidence of student engagement and involvement with the curriculum was demonstrated through watching the film, jotting notes and reflecting on the film, as well as through small group and the large group Socratic dialogue activities. Table 5.1 offers a visual summary of student involvement on the topic of harmony.

**Table 5.1. Summary of student engagement during session: Harmony**

	Range of involvement	Sensory involvement	Ethical involvement
Topic: Harmony	No students were absent from school during the activities; No students opted out of the activities	Watching: <i>The Human Experience</i> ; Socratic dialogue on service	Intended theme: Building community with outcasts, especially individuals living in poverty
Collected artifacts: 11 of 16 worksheets (D.1)	A sentence or two to full-page essay response answers	9 of the worksheets had complete answers for all open-ended questions	Timothy: I learned that homeless people are the same as us
Dialogue: 34.58 mins; transcription	9 students contributed to the Socratic dialogue	6 students consistently contributed to the dialogue	Jerome: everybody's good, everybody's the same

The following narrative vignettes also serve as supporting evidence of aesthetic engagement by demonstrating sensory, logical, emotional, and ethical connections expressed by the students throughout the course of the implementation.

After watching the film, the students were given 15-minutes to discuss the open-ended questions in small groups, consisting of three or four students, before they assembled into a large circle for a Socratic dialogue. The open-ended questions on the worksheet initially prompted the student-participants to define basic terms such as harmony, discord, and community, in their own words. Some of the written responses and jotted notes for the student-participants included the following (collected artifacts: Appendix D.1, April 17, 2018):

Harold [written response]: harmony – a balance of peace and togetherness

Richard [written response]: harmony – working together as one

Robert [written response]: harmony – working together in unison, peace

Donald [written response]: harmony – being at peace in your life, happy, working together in unison

There was consistency present in the written shared interpretations of the students' definitions for the term harmony. The student definitions included: a relationship with others on a deep holistic level, united in the same *telos* or goal, and a sense of being at peace within the relationship or community. The written responses for this part of the activity were composed primarily of very static answers that focused at the face-value perspective of the term. After the students met in the small groups and explored the topic with their peers, they were invited to create a large circle with their desks for a Socratic dialogue style conversation:

All of the students now gathered their desks in a circle; not really a circle, more like an oblong oval. They were facing each other, and most of the students looked uncomfortable through their posture – quite a bit of squirming and adjusting movements in their chairs. The classroom itself wasn't built with this arrangement of desks in mind. It was an odd rectangular-shaped room built to accommodate several desks per row but only a four-desk depth per column. The room seemed to be designed only for the students to face forward, toward the board, no other direction - and now the students were spread out with the backs of their chairs touching the walls, and their elbows touching other students to accommodate the seating arrangement. Looking at each other, anxiously anticipating some type of prompt. I then began, "ok, gentlemen..." I took a short pause to be sure I had their attention, and when their eyes were fixed on me I then finished, "what is harmony?" There was a brief silence while students were looking back and forth to see who would answer first. One student nervously raised his hand, and softly answered:

Jerome [timidly]: it's uh, like a balance, like, between a community; kind of where it's kind of stable (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Timothy [speaking, while thinking out loud]: it's where people are all just working together as well, and just, they work together to finish a task (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Oakland [with confidence]: I think harmony is being able to interact with a person, communicate with them, be able to understand them on a more personal level than just what you see – try to go to their past and understand them (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

As the student-participants became more comfortable and confident in the atmosphere of the large circle, their responses were more articulate and defined and offered a willingness to explore new beliefs and change from previous ideologies which illustrated disequilibrium in their

thought processes. A similar contrast was present between the written and verbal responses for the definition of the term: discord. Consider the following responses which illustrate the students' exploration and shared interpretative experiences of the term discord (collected artifacts: Appendix D.1, April 17, 2018):

Richard [written response]: discord – working independently and not rhythmically

Robert [written response]: discord – opposite of harmony, out of control, choas [sic]

Donald [written response]: discord – something is wrong with your life, unhappy, arguments

Harold: [verbal response; started soft and timidly but ended louder with more confidence]: it's like, you'll probably have discord when you can't, like, you don't understand another person; like two different religions will normally have discord because they're not understanding each other, most of the time they're not even trying to (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Oakland [verbal response; clear, without hesitation]: I think discord is stereotyping or having a misunderstanding of a person just based off what they've done (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

The student-participant responses above illustrate that the students consistently interpreted discord as a negative experience; one student even used the example of two different religions unable to dialogue as an example of discord. When the student-participants were prompted to explore what is needed when discord is present in a community or environment, one student led the conversation:

Jerome [verbal response; soft volume but with passion]: my advice is to find common ground; like something you both agree upon. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

The students readily agreed with this student's interpretation and were excited to share examples from the film, *The Human Experience*, that illustrated the establishment of common ground between the main characters and the various groups of people that they encountered throughout the course of the film:

Jerome [verbal response; loud volume but with excitement as if he admires surfing]: the surfing experience! They went out to live with the surfers... they went there, the surfers went there to do service and had service work. Jeff and Cliff went as well to do service and ended up, they all went surfing. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Oakland [verbal response; normal volume but collecting his thoughts]: there's umm, I forget the one who's scared to death of bugs, and there were bugs all across Africa and he didn't really... he wasn't really too prepared but he was willing to face that to help others to serve. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Donald [verbal response; normal volume]: when they lived with the homeless in the street. They went to sleep like they were homeless. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Although these students were using scenes from the film as a springboard, the responses illustrate the strength of education found through a lived experience. Giussani (2001) claimed that it is through a lived experience that students can learn truth through self-discovery as well as learn about others. The experience of watching the recounted scenes from the film offered these students a tangible frame of reference to share and interpret an example of the theme of establishing common ground with others.

**Student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences.** As the dialogue evolved the students-participants became more comfortable in the circle of their peers and began to share and explore the common ground experiences they had in their community service project experiences. The conversation naturally evolved beyond the context of the film as a frame of reference and exploring their own personal community service experiences:

Harold [verbal response; normal volume with enthusiasm, proud of his work]: well I volunteer at the children's hospital downtown and we like to volunteer to, like, check on the patients to see how they're doing and like bring them stuff when they need it, and we'll play with some of the kids there and just try to make their day better. So, that what I did. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Steve [verbal response; soft volume but with passion]: I worked at a [local family homeless shelter name #1] Christmas party with the wrestling team and we got them presents and like, just played around with them for about an hour. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)



Jerome [verbal response; normal volume, casual, but later surprised while remembering the experience]: I went to [local homeless shelter name #2], uh, homeless shelter for men with the soccer team and so we went and talked to the homeless people, and had to serve them lunch... It brought me closer to people who I never would have never spent time with outside of service. We were there and not distracted. I learned, how like, that even if they don't have what I have they still make the best of it and have fun. Well, so, like when you're on a team, a big part of it is chemistry – sit down and talk as a team. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Larry [verbal response; normal volume but collecting his thoughts]: um, I went with the lacrosse team to a Walmart, out, um, I forgot where it was, but we did shopping with kids with, uh, less fortunate, their families were on less fortunate times so that they could have new clothes, and like winter coats, and a couple of toys for like the Christmas season. Uh, I established common ground by talking with them about, like, what sports they like to play and through what clothes they wear. If they liked a lot toys and stuff, like if they wanted footballs and stuff. I would talk about, like, playing football or if they'd like to play like board games, or video games, I would talk about video games. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Through a theo-educational perspective, this concept of establishing common ground with others parallels the Catholic Church's perspective of ecumenical understanding; of building bridges and creating a dialogue on similar beliefs instead of isolating others by focusing on their different beliefs or ideologies (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2000, #816). Moses (2015) argued that ecumenism, at its roots of universality or finding common ground, was what Thomas Merton believed was at the very core of the nature of the Catholic Church. The later works of Thomas Merton particularly focused on inter-religious dialogue to bridge Western and Eastern spirituality, beyond abstract institutional theory but true contact on a holistic individual human level (Merton, 1975; Merton, 2010). This concept of ecumenism is not formally introduced within the USCCB framework until second semester sophomore year and then explored more thoroughly junior year within the Social Justice course, as well as in the senior year in the World Religions course (*Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, 2008). Merton (1966/2009) believed that this type of connection and recognition helps humanity recognize the sacred in the

other, especially individuals who are usually labeled as outcasts (e.g., homeless, sick...). The following student-participant responses illustrate the sacred nature of the other, who are labeled as outcasts in society:

Timothy [verbal response; soft volume, a bit hesitant in his response]: I learned that homeless people are the same as us, they just don't have a home. They are very friendly and welcoming. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Oakland [verbal response; normal volume, confident]: I learned that everyone has a story. We sometimes forget that someone has experiences that have worth. We forget that these people are from a different place and that has different views based off. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Jerome [verbal response; normal volume, a little anxious – like he's trying to figure out what he wants to say]: everybody's good, everybody's the same, it's just how you experience the world. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Harold [written response]: They [the actors in the film] treated them [individuals with leprosy] with dignity and respect b/c [sic] it's what all humans deserve. (collected artifacts: Appendix D.1, April 17, 2018)

As indicated here, the theme of recognizing the dignity and worth of the other emerged from the verbal and written student responses. The written and verbal conversation presented here illustrate that the students were interpreting, from the experiences of the film and their own experiences, that human dignity is something greater than the labels or isolating stigma placed upon others, especially individuals who are stereotyped because of poverty or chronic health conditions.

**Interpretation: Emergent themes.** There were two emergent themes from the data on the topic of harmony: a) establishing common ground with the other, and b) recognizing the value and worth of the human person. The student data indicated that harmony is founded on finding what is in common with others instead of dwelling on the differences that separate and isolate the individuals. Jerome suggested that a tactic of establishing harmony: “is to find common ground; like something you both agree upon” (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018). Student data also

indicated that dignity and worth are an inherent part of being human. Harold succinctly advocated the value and worth of the human person, as he wrote: “dignity and respect... it’s what all humans deserve” (collected artifacts: Appendix D.1, April 17, 2018).

## **Balance**

The focal activity regarding the theme of balance was the student dialogue that centered on their experience of a silent meditation. To introduce silent meditation and the theme of balance, I had the students first watch an 8-minute short film, *Noise* (Stoner, 2005). The theme of this short film challenges the viewer to reflect on the purpose of silence, from a Scriptural perspective. It is comprised of introductory dialogue that explains the bombardment of noise in the contemporary world, then contains roughly six minutes of Scripture passages for the viewer to read and center their thoughts upon in silence (Bell, 2005). I used this clip as a conversation starter to prepare the students for the longer silent meditation experience, as well as an opportunity to verbally reflect as a large group on centering one’s self. The students wrote personal reflections on their longer silent meditative experience through personal journaling the following day. The purpose of this reflection activity was to create an opportunity to invite the students to reflect and share about their experience and self-discovery.

**Description.** Evidence of student involvement was demonstrated through watching the short video clip, large group reflection on the film, as well as the silent meditation and personal journaling. Table 5.2 offers a visual summary of student involvement on the topic of balance.

**Table 5.2. Summary of student engagement during session: Balance**

	Range of involvement	Sensory involvement	Ethical involvement
Topic: Balance	3 students absent during the personal journal writing; No students opted out of the activities	Watching: <i>Noise</i> ; Silent meditation	Intended theme: Finding internal calm and peace
Collected artifacts: 16 of 16 worksheets (B.1/B.2); 13 of 13 (journal)	From a quarter of a page to full page of writing (B.2); From half a page to two pages (journal)	Most students were still, a few fidgeted frequently, 3 students feel asleep (meditation)	Larry: I think that it helps relieve stress, calm [sic] yourself, and, overall, prepare [sic] your mind for what you will do next
Dialogue: 9.48 mins ( <i>Noise</i> ); 10.30 mins (meditation); transcriptions	10 students contributed ( <i>Noise</i> ); 6 students contributed (meditation)	5 students consistently contributed ( <i>Noise</i> ); 6 students consistently contributed (meditation)	Robert: one thing I really liked was we meditated because... I learned a new thing that I can do later on, that I can do to calm me down

The following narrative vignettes also serve as supporting evidence of aesthetic engagement by demonstrating sensory, logical, emotional, and ethical connections expressed by the students throughout the course of the implementation.

After the conclusion of the short film, *Noise* (Stoner, 2005), I invited the students to dialogue and share their experiences of the message of the short video and their feelings of the reflection on the topic of silence. This initial dialogue of the video clip on silence offered a range of interpretations and shared experiences from the student-participants:

Jerome [verbal response; normal volume but collecting his thoughts]: you never really fully experience, like, real silence in the world because technology and stuff is your main focus and we never really take a minute to just be silent for awhile [sic], and be yourself. (large group discussion, April 19, 2018)

Timothy [verbal response; soft volume, a bit anxious]: I think that sometimes you will get uncomfortable when you're, like, not saying anything, so you'll, like, fill the void and do

something to lighten the mood and just leave the discomfort of not being able to hear anything. (large group discussion, April 19, 2018)

Donald [verbal response; normal volume, clear]: silence represents the unknown, you don't know what or who it is sometimes. (large group discussion, April 19, 2018)

To create a contrast between silence and noise, the conclusion of the short film, *Noise*, has a dramatic change from the 6-minute silent reflection to loud, indistinct noise. The noise mirrors an individual flipping through tv channels but not stopping long enough to clearly understand the dialogue. The following vignette recounts a sequential conversation that specifically related to the student-participants' reactions to the dramatic change from silence to noise that occurred at the conclusion of the short film:

Oakland [verbal response; normal volume but collecting his thoughts]: I kinda had my eyes closed and I was kinda drifting off a little bit, I wasn't falling asleep, but you know, it's like

Robert [verbal response; sarcastically, seriously believing that Oakland feel asleep]: come on,

Oakland

Oakland [verbal response; normal volume but collecting his thoughts]: yea, but then I heard it and it shook me and it was like

Matthew [verbal response; soft volume, passionate, cutting off Oakland before he finished]: that's kinda the way I felt – agitated. I was feeling calm and then felt agitated

Harold [verbal response; normal volume, frank, full eye contact]: well I was like, I was kinda relieved cause like the silence can be kind of unnerving at times and like you really need the sound, you know (large group discussion, April 19, 2018)

The student experiences and engagement varied to the video clip about silence; some of the students felt a peace and calm with the silence while others felt unnerved, and some were becoming so comfortable they were starting to fall asleep.

To create disequilibrium in the lives of the students, as suggested in Delta Theory (Tharp, 2012), I purposefully decided to have the silent meditation experience occur in an unfamiliar part of the school grounds; a quiet part of the school that the students do not use or visit, a loft located above the student chapel:

Above the student chapel there is a loft; it was originally designed to be a choir loft but was later renovated, with carpeting, to be a quiet place for students to meditate or reflect. Some of the junior and senior theology teachers use it, but it rarely used by freshmen theology teachers. The walls are wood paneling and radiate a smell of an old cabin. As the students entered the space, they were excited to grab a cushion and find a comfortable spot to sit. Most of the students tried to sit along the side walls of the chapel, for back support. Each student found a spot to sit – they spread out – and had enough room to not touch other students. In the tradition of Christian practice, I struck a match – *whisk* – and lit a candle the candle offered little light but was a remembrance of the presence of Jesus for that moment and activity. I first brought the students into a posture proper for meditation: sitting with their backs straight. I also invited them to close their eyes and sit - in silence - focusing on their breathing – slow breathing: in and out – some students put their hand on their stomach to feel the expansion and deflation of the air, as a form of centering. I started the audio clip and as the Tibetan gong sounded – the silent meditation began... the students sat quietly, a few squirmed, a couple needed to reposition their posture... if there was a noise, I would re-center the students on their breathing, slowly and softly recollecting their posture during the experience. As the time progressed most of the students remained silent - a couple of students feel asleep, one student started snoring and I gently nudged him to recollect his posture and presence to the activity. As the meditation drew closer to 15 minutes, I noticed that there was much more squirming and louder movements. Because of the consistent fidgeting that was developing, I decided to shorten the silent meditation to 16 minutes instead of 20 minutes to keep the intensity of the experience for the students’ writings.

When the students returned to the classroom they were given roughly 10 to 15 minutes to personally reflect on their meditative experience using the open-ended questions on the worksheet (Appendix B.1); their written answers were to be written on the blank lined page located on the back-side of the worksheet (Appendix B.2).

**Student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences.** The student-participants’ experiences consistently mentioned a feeling of calm, peace, and stillness in body and mind.

Some of the student-participants expressed a feeling of a lifting or removing of stress or pressure. (collected artifacts: Appendix B.1/B.2, April 20, 2018):

Harold [written response]: I felt peaceful during the meditation. This was the first time in a long time that I felt truly calm and safe. I would totally do this again because it helped me to relax and not be stressed. I liked the feeling of peace, healing and safety I got from this.

Richard [written response]: During the experience, I felt relaxed and I enjoyed it, overall. I wish we could do that for the whole day... It was a very good stress reliever.

Robert [written response]: I feel really relieved of my stress. I never have a time where I can just sit still and think... I was able to get in a nice state of mind.

Jerry [written response]: During the experience I felt very relaxed and in my element. I felt like I was in solitude, but not alone at the same time... I meditate on my own occasionally, it's a truly different experience every time. The one core element is blissful physical relaxation and ease... I suffer from Derealization disorder, a condition where you feel like you're outside your body & that nothing is real. When this happens to me the only way to really help it is meditation or meditative breathing. The mind is a powerful tool and needs to be working properly all the time. This simple breathing can set my entire mind back on track, in just a few minutes.

Matthew [written response]: The mediation this week was very helpful to me. I was having major anxiety over personal stress... It helped me to center myself. I got to let go of what was holding me back

Donald [written response]: During the meditation I felt at peace. I felt like my body was still and I had no burden on my back. If I wanted to move I moved slowly, like I was floating in water or gel... Yes, I would like to meditate again. I felt good and weightless, and my mind was clear.

Oakland [written response]: I felt very relaxed and not as stressed. The tests I have soon didn't seem as bad as I thought they were. I felt almost lighter; I felt like a weight was lifted off of me. I wish I was able to meditate for more time because I felt so relaxed.

A few of the student-participant responses indicated that they had varying types of engagement and interpretative experiences, such as falling asleep, anxiety to the stillness, and the inability to settle their thoughts (collected artifacts: Appendix B.1/B.2, April 20, 2018):

Steve [written response]: I don't feel like I was able to still my mind at all but it was good. It was a little discomforting.

Brad [written response]: During the experience I fealt [sic] relaxed and I feel asleep a couple of times but it was very peaceful.

Larry [written response]: I found it very hard to still my mind. Throughout the experience, I thought of a lot of things and found it sort of difficult to focus. I would like to meditate more because I think that it helps relieve stress, calm yourself, and overall, prepare your mind for what you will do next.

Jerome [written response]: I felt like I was thinking a lot more than I should've. I didn't expect myself to do it right since I've never really meditated, but maybe next time, I can be more calm. It was challenging because our brains are always thinking, and it's not exactly easy to control.

It is interesting to note that the students here mentioned that although the silent meditation was discomforting or difficult but still described it as a good experience or an experience they interpreted as beneficial. One student indicated that he hopes that he would be able to meditate more frequently because he interpreted that meditation helps relieve stress; such a response indicates that the student is looking for something to help relieve stress and establish more calm in his life.

**Interpretation: Emergent themes.** There were three emergent themes from the data on the topic of balance: a) silence is often unnerving and uncomfortable, b) the student-participants desire rest, and c) the student-participants interpreted that meditation helped to relieve stress. The students indicated that silence is an unnerving and unfamiliar experience. As indicated above, Timothy expressed anxiety from his initial experience of silence: "I think that sometimes you will get uncomfortable when you're, like, not saying anything, so you'll, like, fill the void" (large group discussion, April 19, 2018).

After the experience of the meditation, many of the students felt a sense of calm and peace. For many of the students this settled awareness and silence allowed them to rest without the pressure of continual intellectual or athletic expectations. After the silent meditation Harold reflected on a longing for rest: "I felt peaceful during the meditation. This was the first time in a long time that I felt truly calm and safe" (collected artifacts: Appendix B.1/B.2, April 20, 2018). In addition to the needed rest, many students also felt the relief from the continual stressors in their life. Through his written reflection, Matthew interpreted that the meditation was a source of peace: "The mediation this week was very helpful to me. I was having major anxiety over



personal stress... It helped me to center myself. I got to let go of what was holding me back”  
(collected artifacts: Appendix B.1/B.2, April 20, 2018).

## **Order**

The student-participants also explored and experienced the theme of order. Through this session they collaborated to experience and establish rules and structures, through the use of the game *Jenga*, to help create strategies to build and sustain a thriving community or society.

While working in small groups of three or four, the students communicated and engaged together to learn and experience from the strategic and collaborative activity: trying to keep a Jenga Tower up as long as possible. Jenga is primarily known as a children’s stacking block game. Throughout the course of the game, individual pieces are removed from lower levels of the tower and placed at the top of the tower, creating another row of blocks, while trying not to cause the tower of blocks to fall because of an imbalance created by the lacking blocks. Throughout the course of the game, the tower of blocks often becomes unstable and will eventually fall.

**Description.** Evidence of student involvement was demonstrated through playing Jenga, as a group, personal reflections on the open-ended questions, and a large group reflection of the activity. Table 5.3 offers a visual summary of student involvement in the topic of order.

**Table 5.3. Summary of student engagement during session: Order**

	Range of involvement	Sensory involvement	Ethical involvement
Topic: Order	No students were absent from school during the activities; No students opted out of the activities	Jenga: group game; Large group dialogue	Intended theme: Finding value in structure and order of society
Collected artifacts: 16 of 16 worksheets (A.4/A.5)	All activities answered (A.4); From 3 questions to all questions completed (A.5)	All students completed (A.4); 14 students had 75% or more completed (A.5)	Harold: We encouraged everyone to keep a positive atmosphere... I was as equal as everyone else
Dialogue: 44.09 mins (activity); 20.50 mins (discussion); transcriptions	All students contributed (activity); All students contributed (discussion)	All students were involved dialoguing in groups (activity); 14 students were consistent (discussion)	James: everybody is an equal part of the group.

The following narrative vignettes will also serve as supporting evidence of aesthetic engagement by demonstrating sensory, logical, emotional, and ethical connections expressed by the students throughout the course of the implementation.

The topic and activity for the session was presented by a guest instructor. She introduced the topic with the use of a PowerPoint file to set the stage for the students' experience (See Appendices A.1, A.2, and A.3). During the introduction PowerPoint she played a short YouTube clip from a commencement speech by Neil deGrasse Tyson, on the topic of critical thinking (Goalcast, 2017). This clip was used to challenge the students to be expansive in their creative approaches to the group activity. The guest educator invited the groups to establish three rules to use as the game progressed. Each group would create three rules, as a structural basis for their group, and after the game was finished the individuals were supposed to reflect on how those rules helped their group and collaboration throughout the course of the game. At the conclusion

of the introductory PowerPoint instructions the students assembled into small groups and waited for the final instructions to begin the activity:

The natural environment of the classroom was again changed. Some students moved their desks out of the way to make enough room on the floor, so that the group could circle around their Jenga Tower. One group of students initially tried to position two desks together and place their tower on the desktops, but they quickly realized that the desks were not as stable as the ground and they rearranged their group so that their tower of blocks was on the solid foundation of the floor. Some of the students sat cross-legged on the floor around their tower, while others were laying on their stomachs on the floor leaning close around their towers. The classroom was full of excitement and anticipation as the students awaited the signal to start playing Jenga. “Ok, you guys ready?” the students waited with for the signal, like drivers at the beginning of a race... “GO!” with the signal indistinct talking and conversation erupted from the student groups, as they started collaborating and communicating together.

The following sequential vignettes illustrate some of the engagement and dialogue shared within the experiences of the student-participants in particular groups throughout the course of the group activity. I have included comments on student posture and movement to offer contextual support with the tone and expressions of the students that occurred during the activity:

Group 3 (transcribed group activity dialogue, April 23, 2018)  
[Students sitting cross-legged around the tower, looking intently for the next best move]  
James [uses a pencil to test the movement of several of blocks to find a loose piece]  
James [with excitement, gesturing at a side piece in the center of the tower]: Up here! Up here!  
Harold [with passion]: DON'T TIP IT  
James: [lays on the floor surrounding the tower with his arms and starts removing the piece; the tower starts to tip; the piece is removed safely]  
Harold [relief; his hand covering his mouth]: ohh  
James: [opens one his hands perpendicular to the ground, in the ‘drop the mic’ gesture; exuding pride]

Some of the students, such as James, decided to use creative measures, like the use of a pencil to help push blocks out of the row of the tower without shaking the structure. James also demonstrated his level of excitement when his creativity pays off, impressing his peers, and celebrating his individual victory other groups illustrated encouragement and more of a teamwork mentality.

Group 1 (transcribed group activity dialogue, April 23, 2018)

Brad [pointing out a block that is stuck; loud, nervous]: you can't put both hands on it

Brad to another student [with enthusiasm]: you're doing good

Larry [congratulatory]: that's straight!

Brad [poking different blocks, finds a loose block on the edge pushes it half-way out and allows another student to remove the block]

Richard [starts poking at the blocks trying to find a loose one]

Brad: [excited – hand motioning to stop] chill, chill

Richard gets a block half-way out and Brad [anxious, passionate]: no that one, its gonna fall! Richard pushes it back, tries to move it again

Brad [with more excited, desperate]: the top's gonna fall!

Richard gets the block out and puts it on top

Brad [incredulously]: I have no clue, how on earth did that not fall?

Brad points at a block [nervous, loud]: if you take that one, it's gonna fall

Group 5 (transcribed group activity dialogue, April 23, 2018)

Donald [suggesting]: this one looks loose

Timothy [nervous, trepidation]: wait

Robert [excited and encouraging]: do it! do it! do it!

Donald [removes the piece gently with precision, then relief]: whoo

Robert claps [with approval]

Timothy [congratulatory]: Donald's got the skills!

Several of the students demonstrated verbal encouragement of others in their groups, as a good move occurred. Students also demonstrated their passion and began to be more animated as the game progressed and their tower became less stable. Students would often offer advice on particular pieces to move, as an example of their group collaboration, as demonstrated in the previous narratives. As the game progressed further, and many of the towers became more unstable, the students become confused as to how to proceed; some groups, like Group 1, relied on dialoging with each other to work out a solution, while other groups, like Group 3, proceeded without caution or cooperation.

Group 1 (transcribed group activity dialogue, April 23, 2018)

Brad [confused]: alright what should we do?

Richard [leans in slowly, starts moving a piece] tower sways

Brad [cautious]: Hold on, Richard

Richard [confused, seeking advice]: what should we do?

Brad [flustered]: I don't know

Group 3 (transcribed group activity dialogue, April 23, 2018)  
[a block falls to the ground after being pushed]  
Grady [places the piece on top of the tower; the tower starts to lean but still stands]  
Harold: whoo hoo! [laughs with confidence]  
James [leans in without consulting with the group; flicks a piece out of the bottom row]  
[the tower falls; the students put their hands up to their heads in disgust]  
Harold [in frustration]: OH NO  
All student in the group together: JENGA!

The following day the students were given an opportunity to reflect on their experiences of the group activity in written responses (Appendices A.4/A.5), and then verbally in a large group discussion of the experience. Throughout these shared experiences the students indicated that positive reinforcement, calm communication, and creative collaboration establish an environment for successful strategy and group dynamics. In contrast, some of the students indicated that anger, resentment, and aggression create unhealthy atmospheres that lead to mistakes, lack of respect, and ultimately failure in the group task. While exploring the student experiences of successful aspects of group dynamics, the following experiences were mentioned. (large group discussion, April 24, 2018):

Harold [verbal response: excitedly, eager to share]: well, we decided that we were going to follow a system so we wouldn't bicker. We had a talking stick, and the one who holds it is the one who talks. So, we passed it around and that's how we communicated so that we wouldn't talk over each other... yea, its's right here, gimme a sec [rummages through his materials and brings out a pencil that has a small feather taped to the eraser end; proudly displays the stick for the class]

Larry [verbal response: soft, timid]: um, we kind of were quiet and didn't get angry at each other, 'cause we knew that anger can make mistakes occur.

Steve [verbal response: anxiously]: well like, um, we just really didn't raise our voices or sound like we were trying to like make, make ourselves like the someone in charge. We kept it on like not being able to like, um, speak loudly or like make it so that we were sounding like not having acts of aggression, which would make other people, like, aggressive, like, towards, like calling out or like, like having it fall down. By doing that we were able to go peacefully forward.

Harold [verbal response: a-matter-of-factly, with confidence]: well, we kept on, we like encouraged each other to keep the attitude positive because if we started being negative, um, putting each other down, we just fail quicker.

Jerome [verbal response: reflectively]: I felt the Jenga activity, uh, gave us perspective about foundation and how it's made and it illustrates a good example of like how like community nations and stuff have to be formed and it's all about order and if there is no order then it can crumble.

**Student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences.** At the conclusion of the group discussion of the student-participant experiences of the collaborative game, I invited the students to concisely summarize their experiences. Several of the students consistently shared that good group dynamics rely on including and consulting everyone in the group. Through their jotted notes of the activity, the student-participants shared and explored further aspects of their experiences of beneficial group dynamics (large group discussion, April 24, 2018):

Oakland [verbal response: clearly, with a sigh]: things can go very poorly very quickly if we don't communicate with each other.

Matthew [verbal response: cheerfully]: um, I would say that we need to, need to rely on each other to have success.

Jerome [verbal response: confidently]: your decisions affect everyone in the group, not just yourself.

Steve [verbal response: thinking-out-loud]: um, by looking at various safe alternative courses you can find the best option.

James [verbal response: passionately]: everybody is an equal part of the group.

Although the comments stated above were not consistent among all of the student-participants they nonetheless offer insight into student interpretations of the group activity experience and have peripheral connection with the emerging themes of the data, which will be explored in the following section (collect artifacts: Appendices A.4/A.5, April 24, 2018):

Grady [written response]: need to stay organized

Scotty [written response]: not being quick to blame that person if it fails

Jerome [written response]: People can't be greedy or selfish

Donald [written response]: know what the community needs

Oakland [written response]: remain calm and continue to strategy [sic]... listen to each other's insights

**Interpretation: Emergent themes.** The emergent themes of the session of order were: a) the need for order, b) the need for healthy and clear communication, and c) that each individual has unique insights to contribute to the whole of the group. The students' data indicated that there was a recognition that order and structure have importance in society. Richard wrote: "order is important because you need to have structure in society and without any rules there would be chaos [sic], and it would be a mess" (large group discussion, April 24, 2018). Several students also indicated that clear communication is key for successful group dynamics. Oakland stated: "things can go poorly very quickly if we don't communicate well with others" (large group discussion, April 24, 2018). Several students also indicated through their writings that each person has a unique and essential part to play within the whole. Matthew stated: "we need to rely on each other to have success" (large group discussion, April 24, 2018).

## **Rhythm**

The focal activity regarding the theme of rhythm was the student dialogue that centered on their experience of a drum circle, as well as open responses of a few YouTube clips of music groups that demonstrated a high level of collaboration throughout their performances. Due to the availability of the guest teacher and schedule constraints, the drum circle group activity was the very first activity that the students experienced. Unfortunately, due to illnesses some of the students were absent from school during the drum circle so to supplement and allow those students to have some experiences of the session topic of rhythm three music videos were used to

demonstrate the concept of collaboration. These YouTube clips challenged the students to reflect on the purpose of working in unity, from a musical perspective. The student-participants reflected on their musical experience through personal journaling (Appendix C.1/C.2). The purpose of this reflection activity was to create an opportunity to invite the students to reflect and share about their experiences and the nature of collaboration.

**Description.** Evidence of student involvement was demonstrated through the drum circle, watching the music videos, jotting notes and reflecting on the concept of collaborative rhythm, as well as large group dialogue. Table 5.4 offers a visual summary of student involvement of the topic of rhythm.

	Range of involvement	Sensory involvement	Ethical involvement
Topic: Rhythm	2 students absent during drum circle activity; 1 student absent for music video activity; No students opted out of the activities	Drum circle; Music videos	Intended theme: There is a natural rhythm of life and stability
Collected artifacts: 15 of 15 worksheets (C.1/C.2)	From 0 to all questions answered (C.1); From half a page to one page (C.2)	14 students had all questions answered (C.1); 12 students had half a page or more of writing (C.2)	Steve: If people focus on the rhythm of life the community will be successful  Scotty: Rhythm is a very important key factor to stability
Dialogue: 37.05 mins (drum circle); 7.05 mins (discussion); transcriptions	All students contributed (drum circle); 7 students contributed (discussion)	All students involved (drum circle); 5 students were consistent (discussion)	N/A



With the scheduling adaptations that occurred to the implementation of this session, I will address the initial setting and description for this session in two separate contexts for a coherent narrative of the activities: part I: the drum circle and part II: the music videos. Hopefully, this division will benefit the reader with establishing a more distinct and clear understanding of the activities in narrative context and offer unique insight based on the environment and experiences of the students during the activities. The following narrative vignettes will serve as supporting evidence of aesthetic engagement by demonstrating sensory, logical, emotional, and ethical connections expressed by the students throughout the course of the implementation.

***Part I: The drum circle.*** To create disequilibrium in the lives of the students for this activity, as suggested in Delta Theory (Tharp, 2012), the drum circle experience was purposefully planned to occur in a room of the school building that the freshmen students would not commonly associate with theology class, namely the band room:

The band room is a large room in the basement of the school, where the walls are full of acoustic paneling to absorb the sound. All along the back wall of the room were xylophones, vibraphones, several keyboards, drum kits, and a grand piano. Many of the students were in awe of the number of instruments that were present throughout the room. As the students walked in, they saw a large circle of djembes (a midsized African hand-drum that has a leather-bound skin that serves as the head at the top of the drum and an open holed circle at the bottom) standing on the floor in front of a chair. All of the djembes were a similar color of dark brown wood, decorated with intricate designs reminiscent of African cultures. The students sat down on the chairs, each having a drum in front of them. As they sat, the height of the drum was about waist high. The teacher, Mr. R., stood in the middle of the circle, with a djembe hanging from his body from a complex web of roping. Mr. R. introduced himself to the students and introduced the concept of drum circles, a brief history of the nature of drum circle for the African culture, and how the purpose of the drum circle is to have one voice, though many individuals are playing a rhythm. He sat at a chair to illustrate the posture needed to handle and play the drum for the best resonant sound. Mr. R. had the students imitate his posture, he also illustrated how to lean the drum off of the ground to create a deep resonate tone. The students anticipated their opportunity to hit the drum which was now leaning in front of them, as demonstrated previously. Once again standing, Mr. R. invited the students to follow a rhythm. He started a simple, steady, single beat on the head of the drum – *thump, thump, thump, thump, thump* – to which the students joined in – *thump, th,th,ump, ump, thump, th, th, th*. When the students joined, there was no

consistent beat. With a quick wave of his hand Mr. R. brought the students attention back and – STOP - the students stopped banging on their drums. He discussed how each of the students needed to listen together to create and sustain the beat and rhythm together synchronously to create the effect of a single tone. He also demonstrated that the drum head does not need to be beaten with the hand but demonstrated the proper technique of the hand on the drum - *thump, thump, thump* – the movement was similar to dribbling a basketball.

With Mr. R. directions completed he reiterated the need to listen to their neighbor and follow – taking up the one rhythm. He encouraged the students to come into the rhythm after he started: *thump, thump, thump, thump, thump*. Students started to beat the drum and join in: *thump, th,th,ump, ump, th, th, thump, th, th*, but after a little time a consistent rhythm started to emerge: *th,th,ump, ump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump...* After the rhythmic pattern was sustained for a minute or so Mr. R. brought it a close and congratulated the students on the improvement. Many students were excited and rejoiced – clapped hands and fist bumps - with their neighbors, a couple of students continued to hit the drums – just out the thrill of it – most of the students just looked accomplished in the achievement, smiling or grinning.

Throughout the remainder of the session Mr. R. taught the students more complex drumming patterns, while initially keeping the students sustaining each of the rhythm patterns in unison. As the session progressed Mr. R. started the students with a unison pattern, while he played a counter-pattern that worked as a dialogue, call and response, of the original pattern. As the students became more accustomed Mr. R. then split them into three different groups, with each group sustaining a different unison pattern within the group. A majority of the students enjoyed the kinesthetic experience of drumming and were able to listen, follow, and sustain the rhythmic pattern that was assigned to their group. A few students struggled with rhythm and missed the beat occasionally and had to stop and get back into the rhythm.

As the final minutes arrived Mr. R. had a little fun with the students, and with his hand motion signals led the students in a final rhythm pattern. He had hand signals to increase the volume, to lower the volume, to speed up and slow down the rhythm of the drummer and pointed particular groups with the signals that sped up or slowed down, raised or lower the volume of the drummers. At the conclusions that students were excited and thrilled with the test of the abilities. After they were completed the students were told to leave the drum as they found them, in front of the chairs, which they did. Several students high-fived each other and discussed taking a percussion course in the future or join the band. The students left the room engaged and excited about the experience.

**Part II: The music videos.** Due to the school schedule and time constraints, this second part of the rhythm session occurred in the normal theology classroom. The students were given a worksheet (Appendix C.1) to jot notes and reflect on the open-ended questions regarding how

the musical groups collaborated together throughout the course of the music video. The open-ended questions elicited the student-participants to explore: a) how the musicians communicated throughout the song, b) how they used the musical instruments, and c) what would have happened if the musicians lost the rhythm of the song? The students were shown three videos and were invited to explore two of the three videos in their notes and dialogue. Throughout the course of watching the YouTube videos of the music groups the student-participants wrote the following in their reflections about the posture and gestures of the musicians (collected artifacts: Appendix C.1/C.2, May 1, 2018):

Larry [written response]: They would stop and look around at their partners every once and awhile to gain a perspective of when they should play... They would listen to each others' playing to stabilize themselves.

Scotty [written response]: They kept on looking at each other & each of them moved their bodies the way the song went to keep in rhythm... They would nod their heads to keep rhythm & once they would look at each other's guitar & hands to make sure they were in rhythm.

Jerome [written response]: The musicians were constantly looking and watching each other in order to adjust or continue the rhythm.

Eric [written response]: They listen to the rhythm and know the timing of when to come in or do their part... They watched the other, if one stopped then joined back in.

Oakland [written response]: They would look at each other and see what they were doing. They would also listen to the sounds the others were making... They would move their bodies in certain ways to keep up the beat and rhythm.

Through these responses, the students were interpreting that there is important communication that can occur between others beyond the use of verbal language. One student specifically recognized that individuals can adjust their behavior by listening to and watching others, from the context of the musicians in the music videos. Similar to the group activity on the session of order, the student-participants again interpreted that each person in the group offers a unique part that completes the whole.

**Student-participant self-reflections and shared experiences.** After their initial thoughts and experiences, the students were invited to journal (Appendix C.2) about their personal experiences of either activity included in the rhythm sessions, the drum circle or the music videos. The student-participant responses in the journals further explained and explored their personal experiences and interpretations of the activities as well as expanding the context beyond the activities to other situations such as personal relationships and society at-large (collected artifacts: Appendix C.1/C.2, May 1, 2018):

Harold [written response]: The drum circle was fully dependent on rhythm... Everyone had a part to play in the song and this was one of the first experiences I had where I look at St. Peter Faber as a community... everyone is dependent on one another, and to me that is the definition of community.

Richard [written response]: The drum circle and the clips we watched today show me that everyone has a role in society and that we all must work together to maintain rhythm.

Steve [written response]: In the experience of drumming I learned a few things... If people focus on the rhythm of life the community will be successful in many cases.

Larry [written response]: When we participated in the drum circle, we were told to listen and trust each other's drum playing to base our rhythm on. It was important for us to work as a team as to not sound bad.

Scotty [written response]: Rhythm is a very important key factor to stability because without rhythm things don't flow as easily and things can get chaotic. Rhythm brings harmony and allows people to work together... It helped me build better & new relationships because it brings people together into one by working on the same level all in rhythm.

Timothy [written response]: The circle reminded me that this school, the church, and many teams are like that small drum circle. It takes many people to create something great. It also reminded me that I am a part of something greater than myself. Not just the drum circle, but many other things I do are a part of something greater than myself.

The writing from the student-participant journal data illustrated that the session activities elicited consistent experience interpretations from the students that everyone has a part to play in society.

The students related the concept of rhythm to dynamics needed in a team, society, the school,

and the church. One student interpreted that these activities helped him recognize that he is part of something greater than a mere individual.

**Interpretation: Emergent themes.** Throughout this session several emergent themes were present in the student-participants' written and verbal data on the topic of rhythm: a) there is a natural rhythm of life, b) the importance communication beyond words, and c) that each individual has unique insights to contribute to the whole of the group. From the activities and the follow-up reflections the student data indicated that there was recognition of natural rhythm in life. Harold wrote: "The drum circle was fully dependent on rhythm... Everyone had a part to play in the song ... everyone is dependent on one another, and to me that is the definition of community" (collected artifacts: Appendix C.1/C.2, May 1, 2018). Student data also indicated that communication is not just limited to verbal interaction; there is a lot of communication that exists through body movement and listening to others. Jerome wrote: "The musicians were constantly looking and watching each other in order to adjust or continue the rhythm" (collected artifacts: Appendix C.1/C.2, May 1, 2018). The student data also indicated that each individual has a significant part or role within the whole group. Scotty wrote: "Rhythm brings harmony and allows people to work together... It helped me build better & new relationships because it brings people together into one by working on the same level all in rhythm" (collected artifacts: Appendix C.1/C.2, May 1, 2018).

### **No one is an island, the curriculum as a whole**

The themes of the following vignettes from the student journals do not neatly fall under the previous theo-thematic sections mentioned in the previous themes of order, balance, rhythm, or harmony but are nonetheless an important aspect of witness to the student engagement of the

curriculum. The following vignettes will be also explored through a theo-educational lens individually and summarized at the conclusion of this section.

James: I started to think, is my voice ever going to be one that will cause change or ~~we~~ will I just liveout [sic] my life not ~~make~~ making any contribution. I don't want that to ~~be~~ happen, I want to do something to make people know who I am. I want to do it in a good way though. I don't ~~wa~~ want to be the person that people warn others about. I want to make the world a better place... I want people to ~~b~~ be less worried about their individual achievement and more on everyones [sic]. (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018)

This student shared in his journaling that he interpreted the material through this curriculum to challenge him to think deeply about his life choices and his future legacy. Dean (2010) and Smith and Denton (2005) indicate that adolescents have a desire for advocacy and self-discovery, which are clearly illustrated in these remarks. For this student, these topics have also challenged him to move from complacency to disequilibrium, the second stage of Delta Theory (Tharp, 2012).

Robert: I really liked the watching the film. It opened a window to something I have never experienced [sic]. I have never seen so much poverty, but out of that poverty was happiness. People with so little are happier than the people in America who have so much. This made me question my own happiness because I have so much but I am not as happy. This video showed me a new definition of happiness. I learned it isn't about physical property and owning a lot of stuff, but happiness is the relationships you make with other people. (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018)

Similarly, this student acknowledged that the film moved his view from complacency to disequilibrium, an essential component of Delta Theory (Tharp, 2012). This student also acknowledged that the experience of the curriculum material challenged him to re-interpret his definition of happiness. He stated that happiness is found in relationships with others which echoes the writings of Thomas Merton (Merton, 1983).

Steve: The Human Experience was eye opening for me. I felt very changed after seeing the film. I felt some of the things that people feel while going through their daily lives. The Idea [sic] that everyone has obsticles [sic] in their life is very strange in a way that now I cannot think of any person in a stereotypical way just because of what they have or

are a part of. This is looking at both good and bad things. The Idea [sic] that when all you have is lost, but you are still fighting because they believe that God has a plan for them in the future. (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018)

This student indicated that the film, *The Human Experience*, moved his view from complacency to disequilibrium (Tharp, 2012). This student also indicated that this perspective has changed his focus beyond labels and stereotypes but on an authentic dignity of the human person.

Matthew: Another experience I enjoyed was watching The Human Experience. It was empowering to me. These 2 brothers really went for it. I want to go for it like that and make a major change in the process. Through my going for it, I want to make a difference in our world. The difference is something I can be proud of. All it takes is one step, one decision, to permanently [sic] move forward in a fantastic, new, and electrifying direction. That's what I'm going to do -> TAKE the FIRST STEP to something great and powerful and freeing. Let's DO this! (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018)

This student's journal reflection does not focus on his change of perspective of others, but a renewed belief in himself. Although abstract the dialogue here contains great emotion and determination to make a change in his life and advocate for himself. This type of language mirrors the progression from complacency through disequilibrium to change, the third stage of Delta Theory (Tharp, 2012). Through the use of dynamic writings, such as the capitalization and punctuation, this student illustrated a moved in his mindset from consistency to disequilibrium, and to systematic change.

Larry: Watching the film, The Human Experience, was a very opening experience. It has really expanded my view of the world, and it has provided me with many positive messages. The first message that comes to mind is that physical possessions don't really provide true happiness... Another message is that community is important... The last message that I took from the film was that you should always try to improve. (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018)

This student's journal writing combines many of the previous shared experiences of change of the definition of happiness and improving one's life.

Jerome: The circle [Socratic dialogue] was a fun thing to experience too. Even though some people didn't contribute, I got to hear how some of my classmates feel and also

some things about them. I felt free to share my thoughts, and I never felt judged. Sometimes I feel like creating a circle of people makes me feel better than sitting in rows and columns. (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018)

This student's response indicates the importance he places on community and feeling connected with his peers. He interpreted the circle of his peers to be free, safe and nonjudgmental.

**Interpretation: Emergent themes.** Throughout the course of the curriculum implementation four overarching themes emerged from the student-participants' data: a) all humanity has worth and value, b) it is essential to develop common ground with others, c) peace and calm are better than aggression and anger, and d) happiness is greater than material possessions.

***All humanity has worth and value.*** Throughout the course of the curriculum implementation this theme was the most consistently present and shared throughout the student-participants' responses. This theme was shared by the students in various ways from directly mentioning that humanity has worth to stating that everyone has an important part within the whole community, or that everyone has their own story or experience.

During the session on harmony, students interpreted from the film and their service experiences that individuals outcasted because of poverty, sickness are not different than anyone else, as Jerome clearly summarized: "everyone's good, everybody's the same" (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018). Throughout the session on balance students recognized their own worth and need to take care of their health and wholeness. Steve stated: "from this I believe that I must take more time to analyze my own thoughts to alleviate some of the stress that I have" (collected artifacts: Appendix B.1/B.2, April 20, 2018). Oakland also reflected: "you need to step back and kind of figure out what you need to do to be your best self and figure if I'm doing something wrong and it so how do I fix it?" (collected artifacts: Appendix B.1/B.2, April 20, 2018). During the session on order, several students shared that each person offers an important



part of the group. James stated: “everybody is an equal part of the group” (large group discussion, April 24, 2018). Finally, during the session on rhythm there was consistent interpretations that everyone adds to the group. Harold summarized: “everyone is dependent on one another, and to me that is the definition of community” (collected artifacts: Appendix C.1/C.2, May 1, 2018).

***It is essential to develop common ground with others.*** Throughout the course of the curriculum implementation, the concept of common ground was also a consistently prominent theme shared by the student-participants’ responses. This theme was shared by the students from directly mentioning establishing common ground to know others on a deeper level than face value to understanding and having healthy communication to sustain order and rhythm. In conjunction with the previous overarching theme of recognizing the dignity of others, in this theme the students recognized a tactic to develop a relationship with others, in response to the isolation and alienation that often exists in clichés and bullying situations.

The concept of establishing common ground within relationships originated from Jerome: “my advice is to find common ground; like something you both agree upon” (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018). This theme then was then developed and explored by all the students through the remainder of the curriculum implementation. The students interpreted that it is through common ground that deep meaningful relationship with others are developed and sustained, by authentic sharing and listening to understand the other. Scotty stated: “This is understanding, when it is your turn to engage in the discussion and when it is your turn to sit back and listen to the other collaborators” (collect artifacts: Appendices A.4/A.5, April 24, 2018). Oakland also stated: “it is important to communicate with others” (large group discussion, April 24, 2018).

***Peace and calm are better than aggression and anger.*** This overarching theme was shared by the students in various ways as well; from the direct experience of trying to stay calm within the midst of the stress of the group activity, the Jenga game; as well as the personal stresses (e.g. homework, family expectations, and sports) that affected the students. Many of the students did not realize the effect of such stresses until they were able to reflect on their experience of the stillness during the silent meditation. Several students interpreted that aggression and anger lead to mistakes and failures in group dynamics. Throughout the session on balance students consistently indicated that stress and anxiety weight down their lives. During the topic on harmony, Scotty wrote that community is found through: “working together in peace and harmony” (collected artifacts: D.1, April 17, 2018). Oakland mentioned similar insights in his reflections of the topic of balance: “I would like to meditate in the future. It would help me get out of my daily routine and find some peace and balance.” (collected artifacts: B.1/B.2, April 19, 2018). During the conversation after the Jenga group activity, Larry indicated: “we kind of were quiet and didn’t get angry at each other ‘cause we knew that anger can make mistakes to occur” (large group dialogue, April 24, 2018). Donald also similarly reflected in his writings on the topic of rhythm: “I believe that rhythm can help someone become in tune in life because rhythm can make life tranquill [sic]” (collected artifacts: C.1/C.2, May 1, 2018).

***Happiness is greater than material possessions.*** The overarching theme of happiness being greater than material possessions was also found throughout the course of the curriculum, although it was most consistently mentioned within the student reflections about the film and service experiences. Harold expressed his amazement when describing the life of community of lepers shown in *The Human Experience*: “they still went on with their lives even if they were in a bad situation they were still happy... and I thought that was really cool to see that” (large group

dialogue, April 17, 2018). In his journal Robert wrote: “I learned it isn’t about physical property and owning a lot of stuff, but happiness is the relationships you make with other people.” (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018). Grady indicates a similar insight when describing the difference between the pressure of athletic goals and settling one’s self in meditation: “my soccer tournament is causing me a lot of stress because there may be colleges watching me. School in general causing me stress because... I need to make sure I keep my grades up; I would like to meditate again in the future. It helped me feel very calm and relaxed. It was a nice change of pace” (collected artifacts: B.1/B.2, April 19, 2018). During his reflections on order Matthew reflected that order could lead to happiness: “Yes... order allows for positive things to grow” (collect artifacts: Appendices A.4/A.5, April 24, 2018). This theme seemed to be the most surprising as the students reflected in their writings and dialogues.

## **Evaluation**

Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) state that the evaluation stage of education criticism and connoisseurship research appraises the intervention or educational phenomenon studied. This stage of the methodology assists in educational change because it can offer insight to determine if the intervention progresses toward the goal (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). Using this perspective of a having goal in mind, the purpose of this study was to explore the student responses to the topic themes as a viable response to bullying, through a theo-educational lens. Two considerations should be acknowledged to be considered as a formal possible Catholic curriculum response to bullying: a) do the topics conform with the current expectations of the secondary Catholic curriculum, as established by the USCCB? (*Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, 2008), and b) do students interpret a view of the human person with

greater worth than as lesser worth or objectified? The following section will explore the value of the emergent themes from the data with those two perspectives in mind.

**Value of the data.** The purpose of this study was to explore a response to bullying based on a curriculum based on the writings and themes of Thomas Merton. The first-iteration curriculum was created for adolescents and was posited to open a discussion for students to explore the dignity of the human person. The following sections will explore the student-participant responses in light of the five topics that influenced the literature review of this study: a) bullying, b) adolescent spirituality, c) Catholic education, d) curriculum, and e) the use and writings of Thomas Merton. The value of the data from this study will be explored by comparing student data, received curriculum, against the intended curriculum topics which originally informed the study.

**Bullying.** Bullying has been recognized as an epidemic (Leonard, 2014). Huggins (2016) and Philippe et al. (2017) have stated that Catholic institutions can lead the way in re-imagining a response to bullying that could appreciate the holistic perspective of the human person: body, mind, and soul. This study was created to research a response to that call. Huggins (2016) argued that the root of bullying is the stigma placed upon the other, that leads to isolation and dehumanization of that individual.

One of the themes that emerged from the student-participant responses to the curriculum indicated that the students recognized that all humanity has worth and dignity. This theme challenges the concept of stigma and objectification, which is rooted in bullying. A second theme that emerged from the student-participant responses to the curriculum indicated that through the activities and reflections the students recognized that it is essential to establish common ground with others; to truly get to know them. This theme challenges the concept of

isolation, prominent to bullying. A third theme that emerged from the student-participant responses to the curriculum indicated that through the activities and reflections the students recognized that peace and calm are better than aggression and anger. This theme challenges the concept of aggression and the power imbalance prominent to bullying. The final theme that emerged from the student responses was happiness is greater than material possessions. Although not directly challenging a direct aspect of bullying, this theme may address greed which could be considered a motivator of bullying (Leonard, 2014).

These four themes that emerged from the data collected from the curriculum implementation suggest that the students' interpretation of the topic could be used to address direct aspects of bullying, such as stigma and isolation, as well as indirect motivators, such as greed and anger. The topics of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony embedded in a curriculum response to bullying seem to address underlying aspects of bullying not often discussed in common responses to bullying.

***Adolescent spirituality.*** Dean (2010) indicated that adolescent spirituality is defined that three aspects: a) self-discovery, b) passion, and c) advocacy. The first-iteration curriculum activities were chosen to connect with adolescents and help them recognize the dignity of the human person in a way that they could engage and understand. Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) stated that a designed curriculum is not necessarily what is received or engaged by the students. Throughout the course the data there was evidence of self-discovery, passion, and advocacy.

The student journals offered the bulk of the data that explored self-discovery and advocacy. As the students reflected on the film, *The Human Experience*, some of the students reflected:

Matthew: “It was empowering to me. These 2 brothers really went for it. I want to go for it like that and make a major change in the process. Through my going for it, I want to make a difference in our world” (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018).

Robert: “I really liked the watching the film. It opened a window to something I have never experienced [sic]. I have never seen so much poverty, but out of that poverty was happiness... This made me question my own happiness because I have so much but I am not as happy” (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018).

James: “I want to do something to make people know who I am. I want to do it in a good way though... I want to make the world a better place...” (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018).

Passion was displayed by many students throughout the course of their dialogues, but most clearly in the group Jenga game and the drum circle. As documented in the description section last chapter, students encouraged, celebrated, mourned, and collaborated together to try to keep their towers up as long as possible. The activity responses were similar to the dynamics of a sports team, where the students relied on their teammates to succeed and celebrated their experience together.

The collected data from the curriculum implementation suggest that the students’ interpretation of the topics relates to the lived-experience of adolescents because the activities connect with the three aspects of adolescent spirituality demonstrated in the shared interpretations of the students. The activities used within the curriculum especially the film, *The Human Experience*, and the Jenga group activity and drum circle embedded in a curriculum response to bullying seem to connect to the aspects of self-discovery, passion, and advocacy that define adolescent spirituality.

***Catholic education.*** The content for the first iteration curriculum was designed to be in alignment with the current standards for a theology course as set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the governing body of Catholic education (*Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of*

*High School Age*, 2008). Although many of the topics, such as the Apostolic Mark of the Church, ecumenism or inter-faith dialogue, and Paul of Tarsus' Body of Christ imagery are not fully explained and explored until sophomore, junior, or senior year these topics offer an introductory understanding of the theological topic. Other topics, such as the Beatitudes, Liturgical Year, and *sabbath* are terms and concepts included in the freshmen curriculum that can help the students recognize that such theological concepts are present in real-life tangible experiences. The connection of theological concepts to real-life examples is consistently mentioned as a necessary mode of evangelization and catechesis (Giussani, 2001; John Paul II, 1979; *Living as missionary disciples: National directory for catechesis worksheets*, 2017; Shimabukuro, 2007).

**Curriculum.** The framework for the curriculum used in this study was a 4S Understanding structure. The 4S Understanding was used because of its structure that acknowledged the importance that the subject matter is not learned in isolation, but in concert with self-discovery, relationship with society, and spirituality. Giussani (2001) acknowledged that education is a dialogue that allows a student to mature in thought and decision-making skills. The activities involved open-ended questions for the student-participants to explore and share their personal interpretations of the experiences of the topics. The activities chosen for the session topics involve tangible experiences for the students for a firm contextual connection between the topic and the real world.

The data collected from the student-participants responses indicated that students were able to engage the subject matter in context with self-discovery and society; regarding spirituality the themes that emerged from the student responses indicate that although the students do not use the theological terms, nonetheless the students have a concept of the spiritual

connection rooted in their own language. An example of 4S connection can be seen throughout the evolution of the Socratic dialogue, which occurred during the topic of harmony. The students began discussing the definition of terms, such as harmony and discord, which evolved into what is needed to establish harmony in a community. The following narrative of Jerome, throughout the session on harmony, will serve as an example whose responses mirror the progression of the 4S Understanding in action:

Subject – definition of harmony: Jerome [verbal response; timidly]: it's uh, like a balance, like, between a community; kind of where it's kind of stable (collected artifacts: Appendix D.1, April 17, 2018)

Self - Jerome [verbal response; soft volume but with passion]: my advice is to find common ground; like something you both agree upon. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Society - Jerome [verbal response; loud volume but with excitement as if he admires surfing]: the surfing experience! They went out to live with the surfers... they went there, the surfers went there to do service and had service work. Jeff and Cliff went as well to do service and ended up, they all went surfing. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Self/Society - Jerome [verbal response; normal volume, casual, but later surprised while remembering the experience]: I went to [local homeless shelter name #2], uh, homeless shelter for men with the soccer team and so we went and talked to the homeless people, and had to serve them lunch... It brought me closer to people who I never would have never spent time with outside of service. We were there and not distracted. I learned, how like, that even if they don't have what I have they still make the best of it and have fun. Well, so, like when you're on a team, a big part of it is chemistry – sit down and talk as a team. (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

Society/Spirituality - Jerome [verbal response; normal volume, a little anxious – like he's trying to figure out what he wants to say]: everybody's good, everybody's the same, it's just how you experience the world (Socratic dialogue, April 17, 2018)

This frame of reference, of establishing common ground with others, then evolved into the students recognizing and discovering their own experiences of establishing common ground within their community service locations. The student dialogue then evolved to a deeper recognition of the worth and value of all of humanity; recognizing that there is a holistic nature that is sacred and equal between all people.



*On the use of the writings of Thomas Merton with adolescents.* Loughrey (2013) and Taylor (2002) stated that the writings of Thomas Merton can offer insight into the life experiences and guidance for adolescents. The themes of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony, which were stated by Merton (1983) as the path to happiness established the foundation of the first iteration of an alternative curriculum response to bullying. In respect to the legacy of Merton, his specific life events were not directly incorporated into the curriculum for the students, but rather his themes and passions were incorporated into the context and activities of the curriculum, such as music or drumming and meditation.

The themes that emerged from the student-participant data from the overall curriculum all parallel themes from the writings of Thomas Merton, namely: dignity of the human person, common ground, peace, and happiness is greater than material possessions. Throughout his writings, especially on Christian Humanism, Merton (1966/2009; 1979) discussed the dignity of the human person, based on the sacredness that humanity received through the Incarnation (Moses, 2015). Throughout Merton's later years he focused on establishing common ground between the spiritual traditions of the East and the West (Merton, 1975; Merton, 2010). Although theologically this concept known as ecumenism, the student data illustrated that they could interpret, understand and share the concept in their own words. Peace is a consistent theme in the writings of Thomas Merton (Merton, 1971; Merton, 1980b; Merton, 1994; Merton, 1995a). Merton was an advocate for nonviolent resistance and desired the end of aggression (Merton, 1962/1980). Finally, Merton recognized that true happiness is found in relationship with God and not physical possessions (Merton, 1983).

The curriculum topics and activities, as demonstrated through the student responses, seem to resonate well with the aspects of exploring a new avenue to address bullying, adolescent

spirituality, Catholic education, 4S curriculum framework, and authentic interpretation of the themes and writings of Thomas Merton. The student data indicates that the student-participants were able to engage and articulate themes that could offer an approach for an alternative response to bullying in a Catholic school environment.

### **Thematics**

Uhrmacher, Moroye, and Flinders (2017) state that the thematic stage of education criticism and connoisseurship research offers insight for generalization or anticipations for future contexts. The purpose of qualitative research is not to predict behavior or claim a cause and effect relationship but offer insights into the context of a phenomenon (Eisner, 2003a). This qualitative study was designed to explore student experiences of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the writings and themes of Thomas Merton. Through the student responses and dialogues, the curriculum topics illustrated that the students engaged the topics and through their shared experiences and interpretations the students expressed recognition of the dignity of the human person and their important and unique contribution to a community. The following sections will explore to what extent these previous themes from the student data might be transferable to other educational contexts and curricular situations.

**Transferability.** Eisner (2004) stated that educational curriculums need to teach students critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, creativity, service, and meaningful literacy to prepare for the future, instead of merely specific topics that may or may not be beneficial for the future. This curriculum involved activities that challenged students to think, problem solve, explore creative solutions, and explore community service. Huggins (2016) and Philippe et al. (2017) state that alternative curriculum responses to bullying should challenge students to recognize the dignity of the other, beyond labels and stereotypes. This first-iteration curriculum

attempted to wed the perspectives of Eisner (2004), Huggins (2016), and Philippe et al. (2017) to have a concrete context for problem-solving, creative exploration, dialoguing, offering a real-life tangible service element. The active nature of the activities drew students to engage the curricular topics beyond the passive elements of a curriculum. The multi-modal reflections, through written and verbal dialogues, allowed students to offer their experiences in the most comfortable mode for them. The variety of modes of expression allowed students to contribute with their unique styles and passions.

This curriculum while in its first-iteration stage and was not intended to be transferred or implemented as-is in other contexts. The purpose of this study was to gather information for further exploration and development for future curriculum iterations. With that in mind, the following sections will explore how the themes that emerged from the data may offer insights for a curriculum response to bullying in a Catholic perspective and secular environments.

***Catholic curriculum responses to bullying.*** Catholic secondary schools have the opportunity to challenge students to recognize the dignity of the human person through a holistic perspective: body, mind, and spirit (Huggins, 2016; Philippe et al., 2017). Through focusing on the Incarnation and the sacredness of the human person a Catholic school environment would have the opportunity to explore the worth and value of the human person, in contrast to the effects of stigma and isolation (Baumbach, 2017). The writings and themes of Thomas Merton are historically in the context of Catholic identity and were revered by Pope Francis during his address to the United States Congress (Francis, 2015). This natural connection of Merton's writings and Catholic tradition can be easily used to explore human dignity, ecumenism, peace, and a transcendent definition of happiness.

Although the students' data and interpretations illustrated the recognition of the themes of human dignity, ecumenism, peace, and a transcendent definition of happiness, there was little evidence of a direct connection and application to adolescent bullying, apart from societal isolation. Including direct examples of adolescent bullying and stigma in local examples may elicit a stronger connection and understanding of how the themes can apply to local examples of bullying and bullying behavior. For a greater concrete connection for the students the use of examples of stereotyping and bullying from the writings of Thomas Merton, instead of merely using themes from his writings, may offer further benefit to these initial themes of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony.

***Secular curriculum responses to bullying.*** Although secular secondary schools may not have the opportunity to challenge students to recognize the dignity of the human person through a holistic perspective: body, mind, and spirit, the topics of meditation and community service may offer insight from a democratic moral perspective. Using a 3S Understanding framework, secular institutions may have the opportunity to challenge students to recognize the connection between the subject matter, self-discovery, and society. Although the writings and themes of Thomas Merton are historically in the context of Catholic writings and themes his writings, especially during the Civil Rights Era, contain great value for further context to the challenges of the American society from a historical context.

From a secular perspective, the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. (1967; 1968) and Robert Kennedy (1968) may have concrete connection to the topic and supplement the notion of greater historical consequence for American society than the themes and writings of Thomas Merton alone. Including direct context of adolescent bullying and stigma may elicit further

examples of adolescent connection and understanding of how the themes apply to bullying and bullying behavior.

**Summary.** Table 5.5 offers a visual summary and reference of the themes that emerged from the student data, based on the sessions of harmony, balance, order, and rhythm. Some supporting evidence from the student data is also included to offer examples of the data that emerged into the themes, as well as theological concepts that mirror the themes from the student data. Table 5.6 offers a visual summary and reference of the four themes that emerged from the overarching student data from the whole curriculum.

**Figure 5.5. Overview of emerging session themes**

Topic	Themes	Theological lens	Supporting evidence
Harmony	1 – establishing common ground 2 – recognizing the value and worth of the human person	1 – ecumenism (Baumbach, 2017; Merton, 1975; Paul VI, 1963)  2 – dignity of the human person (Merton, 1966/2009; Merton, 1979; Paul VI, 1965)	1 - Jerome: my advice is to find common ground; like something you both agree upon. 2 – Oakland: I learned... we forget that someone has experiences that have worth.
Balance	1 – silence is often unnerving/uncomfortable 2, 3 – students desire rest; students interpreted meditation helped relieve stress	1 –prayer (CCC, 2000, #2559, #2565; Tomeo, 2007): communication with God  2, 3 – <i>sabbath</i> (Brueggemann, 2017): cyclic rest for holistic health	1 – Donald: silence represents the unknown, you don't know what or who it is sometimes. 2, 3 – Harold: I felt peaceful during the meditation. This was the first time in a long time that I felt truly calm and safe.
Order	1 – need for order 2 – need for healthy and clear communication 3 – each individual has unique insights and contributions	1, 2 – Apostolic (Baumbach, 2017; CCC, 2000, #857)  3 – Body of Christ imagery (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27)	1 – Jerome: it's all about order and if there is no order then it can crumble. 3 – Matthew: I would say that we need to rely on each other to have success
Rhythm	1 – natural rhythm in life 2 – communicate beyond words 3 – each individual is part of the whole	1, 2 – Catholic celebrations and rituals (Chauvet, 2001; Michel, 1937; Paul VI, 1963)  3 – Body of Christ imagery (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27)	1, 2 – Steve: If people focus on the rhythm of life the community will be successful 3 – Richard: everyone has a role in society and that we all must work together to maintain rhythm.

**Figure 5.6. Overview of comprehensive emerging themes**

Theme	Theological lens	Supporting Evidence
All humanity has value and worth	<p>Dignity of the human person (Merton, 1966/2009; Merton, 1979; Paul VI, 1965)</p> <p>Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27)</p>	<p>Jerome: everyone’s good, everybody’s the same.</p> <p>James: everybody is an equal part of the group.</p> <p>Harold: everyone is dependent on one another, and to me that is the definition of community.</p>
It is essential to develop common ground	Ecumenism (Merton, 1975; Merton, 2010; Paul VI, 1963)	<p>Jerome: once you start talking more and more about what they like and don’t like, you are able to make a connection</p> <p>Oakland: communicate with them, be able to understand them on a more personal level than just what you see</p>
Peace and calm are better than aggression and anger	Christian Non-violence (Merton, 1980b; Merton, 2015)	<p>Harold: we encouraged each other to keep the attitude positive because if we started being negative... putting each other down, we just fail quicker</p> <p>Donald: During the meditation I felt at peace. I felt like my body was still and I had no burden on my back.</p>
Happiness is greater than material possessions	Beatitudes (Barron, 2011; Merton, 1983; Mt. 5:3-11)	<p>Robert: I learned it isn’t about physical property and owning a lot of stuff, but happiness is the relationships you make with other people.</p> <p>Larry: Many of the homeless people they encountered are joyful and kind, despite their situations</p>

## CHAPTER VI

### Discussion

Our real journey in life is interior: it is a matter of growth, deepening, and of an even greater surrender to the creative action of love and grace in our hearts. (Merton, 1975, p. 296)

This study was conducted to research the engagement and the shared interpretations of student-participants regarding a first-iteration curriculum response to bullying, based on the themes of the writings of Thomas Merton. The data for this research was collected and analyzed to explore and offer insight regarding student experiences and interpretations in response to the call of a more holistic response to bullying, especially in Catholic schools (Huggins, 2016; Philippe et al., 2017). To explore the collected student-participant data, reflections, journaling, and dialogue about the curriculum activities, the qualitative methodology of education criticism and connoisseurship was used. Educational criticism and connoisseurship as a methodology is based on a four-stage progress: a) description, b) interpretation, c) evaluation, and d) thematics (Uhrmacher, Moroye, & Flinders, 2017). This methodology offers the researcher the opportunity to conduct and explore an educational phenomenon in a natural setting and through a lens of focus to interpret and evaluate the educational phenomenon. The methodology of educational criticism and connoisseurship does not claim to reveal cause and effect relationships but explores the contextual experiences of the phenomenon and offer insights for further courses of action or educational consideration (Eisner, 2003a).

In the previous chapter emergent themes from the student-participant data were presented through descriptions, interpretations, evaluations, and thematics. The student data was viewed through a theo-educational lens illustrating theological concepts that paralleled the student



responses. This chapter will focus on limitations of this study, possible avenues of further exploration based on this research, and concluding remarks regarding the student data and its contribution to research on Merton, adolescent pedagogy, and ways in which the findings may further inform research for Catholic curriculum development, especially to address bullying behavior in adolescents.

## **Findings**

The central questions of this study were: 1) How do adolescent students engage in the aesthetic experience of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes of Thomas Merton's writings? and 2) How do adolescent students interpret and share their experiences of a curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic understanding of the human person, as presented in the themes of Thomas Merton's writings?

Throughout this first-iteration curriculum implementation it was illustrated that the student-participants engaged the activities and themes of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony through various modes: written and verbal reflections, large and small group dialogues, collaborative reflections and group activities, and individual meditation and journaling. The student-participant data also indicated that the students also included varying degrees of enthusiasm toward the curriculum: student data indicated passion, excitement, and vigor during the Jenga group activity; self-reflective peace, calmness, or sleeping during the meditation; energy, drive, and a sense of belonging in the drum circle; and surprise, conversion, and discovery during the film and service reflection.

The student-participants also shared and interpreted their experiences in various modes: while some students were more vocal and expressive through sharing in dialogue, other students

expressed their thoughts and interpretations more through written reflections and journaling. Both dialogue and written data corroborated emergent themes, throughout each of the topical sessions individually and throughout the course as a whole. The following sections will explore the thematic findings in relation to a corresponding theological perspective, which will include reference to the writings of Thomas Merton.

**Harmony.** As indicated in the previous chapter, the emergent themes from the topic of harmony were: a) establishing common ground with the other, and b) recognizing the value and worth of the human person. Theologically, these two themes directly correspond to two core aspects of Catholic doctrine: a) ecumenism/inter-faith dialogue and b) the dignity of the human person. These two concepts are greatly revered in the Constitutional documents of Vatican II in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Paul VI, 1963) and *Gaudium et Spes* (Paul VI, 1965), as well as the most current catechetical resources of from the USCCB (*Living as missionary disciples: National directory for catechesis worksheets*, 2017). Although the students did not specifically read the writings of Thomas Merton for this topic the student-participants were able to articulate, through their language and experiences, concepts that consistently resonate with the spirit of inter-faith dialogue and the dignity of the human person that permeate throughout Merton's Christian Humanist perspective and writings (Merton, 1975; Merton, 1979; Merton, 1983; Merton, 2010; Simmer-Brown, 2014).

**Balance.** The emergent themes from the topic of balance were: a) silence is often unnerving and uncomfortable, b) the student-participants desire rest, and c) the student-participants interpreted that meditation helped relieve stress. Theologically, these themes have deep connection with two core aspects of Judeo-Christian beliefs: a) prayer and b) *sabbath*. The Catholic Church states that prayer is: "a living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good

beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2000, #2565). Tomeo (2007) stated that it is the persistent noise in the world that limits the Christian’s ability to hear God in their life. The student-participants honestly shared the challenge of being silent, in a world of noise. One student claimed for him that silence represents the unknown, which is something he found unnerving. In a theological perspective, the consistency of the student responses of anxiety and the uncomfortable nature of sitting and reflecting in silence indicates that students feel more comfortable speaking without listening, and sharing without comprehending the context in which they are present. The responses of the student-participants that indicate a desire of peace and calm indicate that like Tomeo (2007) suggested adolescents do not know how to easily settle themselves to find stillness and relationship through prayer with God. The scholarship of Dean (2010) supports that adolescents are more likely to talk at God or want God to answer their prayers, or wishlist, than settle themselves into a dialogue in prayerful relationship with God. This data poses further questions regarding adolescents and their experiences of prayer and listening to God which cannot be addressed with great depth here but should be further researched.

A second theological theme that emerged from the writing and experiences of the students relates to the concept of *sabbath*; not just as a day specifically reserved for rest in God, but a cyclic idea of healthily resting the whole body (Brueggemann, 2017). Throughout the collected responses, several students interpreted that they felt relaxed and that a weight was lifted during the silent meditative experience. As the body receives proper amounts of rest it allows the whole body, body, mind, and spirit to recollect energy, heal, and relieve anxiety (Brueggemann, 2017). When adolescents do not take time to allow their bodies to have proper rest, they will not be healthy holistically in body, mind, and spirit (Dean, 2010). The students

interpreted that rest is an important aspect of their life that is lacking in various degrees. As the students indicated through their language: being “in my element,” “feeling of peace, healing and safety I got from this,” and “I felt like my body was still and I had no burden on my back,” there was a holistic experience in body, mind, and spirit that the students interpreted and would like to experience again. These student comments also seem to echo the famous perspective of seeking for the whole and divine *telos* of the human person based in the ancient Christian claim of Augustine of Hippo (354-430) from *The Confessions* (Book I, Chapter I): *cor nostrum inquietum est donec requiescat in Te*: our hearts are restless until they rest in You. Merton (2014) echoes Augustine when describing the power of resting in the presence of God through monastic meditation, *oratio*, prayer, and contemplation. Through these ancient practices, Merton claimed that one’s heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit and centers on the essential nature of being. Through these prayers of the heart, the individual is renewed and finds strength.

**Order.** The following emergent themes from the topic of order were: a) the need for order, b) the need for healthy and clear communication, and c) that each individual has unique insights to contribute to whole of the group. Theologically, these themes connect with two core aspects of Catholic traditions: a) the term apostolic, as referring to the mark of the Church and b) Paul of Tarsus’ Body of Christ imagery, where everyone holds a unique and important part of the ministry of Jesus. The nature of the Apostolic tradition, one of the four Marks of the Church, can be divided into two perspectives: a) the lineage, hierarchy, or succession of the Apostles and b) evangelization (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2000, #77; #857). Apostolic succession refers to the structure or order that developed from passing on the teaching authority from one Bishop to the next, originating and bound to the spiritual lineage of the Apostles (Baumbach, 2017). This sacred order is preserved to protect doctrine and establish and perpetuate the

continuity of the teaching authority from the time of the Apostles to the contemporary. This order maintains and protects the structure and authoritative nature of Catholic teaching throughout the centuries. While the second aspect of Apostolic mark of the Church is an act of passing on the teachings and doctrine, evangelization (Baumbach, 2017). Throughout the student-participant reflections, there is a consistency in recognizing the need for systematic order and rules, while also being able to communicate and convey the rule or message well with others.

Secondly, the student-participants consistently indicated that each person serves an important part of the community. Some of the student-participants remarked that “each person has an important role,” “that it is important to learn insights for others,” or “it is important to rely on each other for success.” These concepts mirror Paul of Tarsus’ theology of the recognition of the unique gifts and contribute each individual has within to the Church community, known as the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27). In Paul’s perspective each person has a unique function and talent that aides the whole and because of that individual calling deserves respect within the whole community. Throughout the data, the student-participants stated that each individual may offer a new perspective or different outlook which may help to solve a problem with a beneficial new solution. In *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Merton (1966/2009) also reflects on the very topic of order when he contrasts healthy order versus systematic indoctrination. He indicates that true order is found in within the unique authenticity of the individual, through freedom and intelligence.

**Rhythm.** The emergent themes of the topic of rhythm were: a) that there is a natural rhythm of life, b) the importance communication beyond words, and c) that each individual has unique insights to contribute to whole of the group. Theologically, these themes have connections with

two core aspects of Catholic structures: a) the concept of the ritual and liturgy and again b) Paul of Tarsus' Body of Christ imagery, where everyone holds a unique and important part of the ministry of Jesus. Within the Catholic tradition, the liturgy plays a foundational role (Paul VI, 1963). From the Sacraments, to the Mass, to the concept of the liturgical year, rhythm is present in the prayers, readings, and rituals of all of the celebrations throughout the course of the Church. The liturgical year, for instance, is based on the life and ministry of Jesus, divided into seasonal celebrations (Paul VI, 1963). Each of the rituals within the Church has an order and ritual expression to bring the congregation to celebrate as one; depending on the importance of the celebration, for instance, some may include the use of incense or particular sung prayers. Rituals and liturgical events in the Church are not just established by a rhythm but also finding their meaning in communication through posture, gesture, and symbols, which are often more meaningful than words (Chauvet, 2001; Michel, 1937; Paul VI, 1963). Although the students did not specifically mention the liturgy, Sacraments, or liturgical year in the course of their experience of the session on rhythm, they acknowledged the importance of a "rhythm of life" and that rhythm "brings people together into one."

Merton (1983; 1999) discusses the nature of seasons and rhythm as well as an importance to the rhythm of the liturgical experiences of the Catholic tradition. The oneness in human identity is another essential aspect of the themes and writings of Thomas Merton (Merton, 1966/2009).

***No one is an island: The curriculum as a whole.*** The four overarching themes that emerged from the curriculum as a whole were: a) all humanity has worth and value, b) it is essential to develop common ground with others, c) peace and calm are better than aggression and anger, and d) happiness is greater than material possessions.

The theme that recognized that all humanity has worth and value has particular theological significance within Catholic doctrine because of the Incarnation and the sacred nature of the human person (Merton, 1979; Paul VI, 1965). Paul of Tarsus, from the earliest written accounts of Christianity, stated the importance and equal value of all people connected to the Body of Christ, no matter rank or label (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27). Although the students do not know the exact theological vocabulary their shared interpretations parallel Catholic ethic and Christian Humanism (Merton, 1979).

The theme of the essential development of common ground with others also has theological significance within Catholic doctrine because of the desire of the connection of all of humanity through ecumenical dialogue (Merton, 1975; Paul VI, 1963). The students' writings explore and share the importance of coming into dialogue with similar beliefs instead of dwelling on the differences that can lead to isolation. Ecumenism is a challenging concept for many people because it is easier not to know others well and treat them as strangers. A similar understanding of the conversion of heart is evident in the data of the students as they recognize that creating common ground changes the relationship with the other. As Steve mentioned: "The Idea that everyone has obstacles [sic] in their life is very strange in a way, that now I cannot think of any person in a stereotypical way just because of what they have or are a part of" (collected artifacts: personal journal, April 20, 2018).

The theme that peace and calm are better than aggression and anger has theological significance within Catholic doctrine because of the nonviolent resistor perspective toward violence (Merton, 2015). The Gospel teachings from the Sermon on the Mount challenge the danger of carrying anger and aggression (Mt. 5:21-25). Thomas Merton realized that when someone encounters the fullness of the sacred dignity of the other, there is no option but desire to

love the other (Merton, 1966/2009). The students interpret anger and aggression to lead to destruction and failure. As Harold indicated: “we encouraged each other to keep the attitude positive because if we started being negative... putting each other down, we just fail quicker” (large group discussion, April 24, 2018).

The theme that happiness is greater than material possessions has theological significance within Catholic practices because of the teachings of the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-11). Merton (1979; 1983; 1989; 2004) continually mentioned that life is deeper and more precious than things of the material world. For Merton happiness was found in the following the way of God. Barron (2011) stated that the Beatitudes, also known as the way of joy, lead to happiness through dependence on God, instead of material and personal strengths (e.g. honor, power, wealth, glory). As Larry commented: “Many of the homeless people they encountered are joyful and kind, despite their situations” (large group dialogue, April 17, 2018).

### **Limitations**

Although this study illustrated that the students engaged and interpreted themes of all humanity has worth and value, it is essential to develop common ground with others, peace and clam are better than aggression and anger, and happiness is greater than material possessions, there was little evidence shown that the students made the direct connection of these themes to adolescent bullying. It is clear that the next iteration of this curriculum should include direct contextual examples to adolescent bullying and local scenarios for the students to directly apply the themes of the curriculum to their real-life and tangible experiences of bullying.

A second limitation of this study was that a Catholic curriculum response to bullying should include more direct Catholic identity. Although the themes that emerged from the student data parallel theological concepts, it would be beneficial to expand and clarify the theological



topics for the students based on their concepts and experiences. To offer more Catholic identity in the curriculum, there could be consideration of including direct writings of Thomas Merton, Pope Francis, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Workers' Movement, or other similar Catholic figures that have revered the influence of Merton or directly corresponded with Merton.

Another limitation of the study is the length of the implementation. The topic themes of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony may be beneficial as a supplement to a bullying curriculum instead of being a curriculum unto itself. It seems from the student data that the activities and reflections for the topics allowed the students to explore and dialogue on the topics. It is possible that the students would understand the topic themes in more depth and connection with more time and within a greater context of the bullying and its effects on society, instead of trying to condense the activities within a 10-day curriculum experience.

Another limitation of the study is the dependence of the curriculum activities on specific instruments, such as the film *The Human Experience*, the use of handdrums, meditation, and Jenga game. Although these activities were shown, through the student data to be engaging, the instruments are by no means the only options to create activities that engage students to an expansive dialogue to the thematic topics of order, balance, rhythm, and harmony and address the roots of bullying behavior.

### **Further inquiry**

This study was planned to be explorative in nature and to offer guidance for further iterations of a curriculum evolution. The themes that emerged from the student data indicate the topic activities engaged the students and challenged them to dialogue and think about the subject matter, self-discovery, society, and spirituality in a deep and challenging perspective. In the vein of Huggins (2016) and Philippe et al. (2017) this study offers further insight for a Catholic

response to bullying, based on the themes and writings of Thomas Merton. The data indicates that this progression challenges students to reconsider their opinions and beliefs on stereotyping, the value and worth of individuals affected by poverty, homelessness, disease, and the respect and appreciation of order and structure to society. Further developments should consider how to focus these themes to apply directly to adolescent bullying situations, as well as the larger society. This data offers insight that expansive dialogues, on the topics, offer a viable option in contrast to the tradition reductionist punitive perspective often used in responses to bullying in schools.

Secondly, this explorative study further establishes that the themes of Thomas Merton have an impact on adolescents in contemporary Catholic institutions. As Del Prete (1990) introduced and indicated, the holistic educational perspective of Merton should continue to be explored and researched for further pedagogical changes in Catholic curriculum and educational practices. It is important to further research and explore Merton's unique approach to education, within his writings as well as within his monastic roles. There is much to be learned from Merton, the teacher. As mentioned previously in this study, there are several more themes from the writings of Merton that could and should be used to engage adolescents, such as living authentically searching for the true-self, true freedom, love, non-violence resistance, and silence (Merton, 1994; Merton, 1995a; Merton, 2007; Shannon, 2005).

Thirdly, this study also recognizes and hopes to further the importance of researching and applying the themes and writing of Thomas Merton to contemporary challenges and situations. Throughout his writings, Merton never directly addressed adolescent bullying, but the themes from his writings have been able to engage contemporary adolescents. Further reading and application of the writings of Thomas Merton could offer foundations for other current topics in

the 21<sup>st</sup> century American consciousness such as immigration reform, gun control, international war, and LGBTQ dialogues from a Catholic, Christian Humanist perspective.

## **Conclusion**

Huggins (2016) and Philippe et al. (2017) stated that Catholic schools need to research and explore curricular programs used to respond to bullying from a holistic perspective of the human person, based on Catholic beliefs and educational tenets. This study explored the experiences and engagement of Catholic secondary students to a first-iteration curriculum response to bullying, based on the holistic perspective of the human person. The findings from this study indicate the student-participants engaged and interpreted, in their own words, themes that parallel the writings of Thomas Merton, though Merton's writings were not used throughout the curriculum. Student data indicated that through the activities and dialogues in the first-iteration curriculum there were signs of the first sparks of change in understanding and perception of dignity and value of others, especially society outcasts. The findings also indicate that students interpreted that peace and calm achieve greater success in contrast to aggression and anger in group dynamics.

This study has added to the body of research that exploration of a holistic response to bullying needs to continue and expand, especially for Catholic school environments. The findings also suggest that the themes from the writings of Thomas Merton can serve as a discussion starter for Catholic secondary students for a dialogue to address bullying, isolation, and stigmatization that frequently occurs in the life of the adolescents. The findings had corroboration through the use of multiple modes of data collection, through written reflections, verbal dialogues and transcriptions, and personal journaling, as well as referential adequacy through member checking, and research of contemporary and historical trends in education. This


researcher hopes that continual research is conducted to refine and explore holistic responses to bullying which can assist students develop recognition of the dignity of the human person and the unique that each person offers to the whole community. As Thomas Merton stated:

Because there is love in the world, and because Christ has taken our nature to Himself, there remains always the hope that man will finally, after many mistakes and even disasters, learn to disarm and to make peace, recognizing that he *must* live at peace with his brother. Yet never have we been less disposed to do this. (Merton, 1966/2009, p. 213).

## APPENDIX A: Curriculum artifacts: Order

### 1. Powerpoint slides (Order): 2/6; slides 1 & 2

The Value of Original Thought:  
<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mpofee&no=scientist+gives+topic+speech#id=4&vid=4ec8457e1ba66212e2d118967a7183&w=1024&h=768>



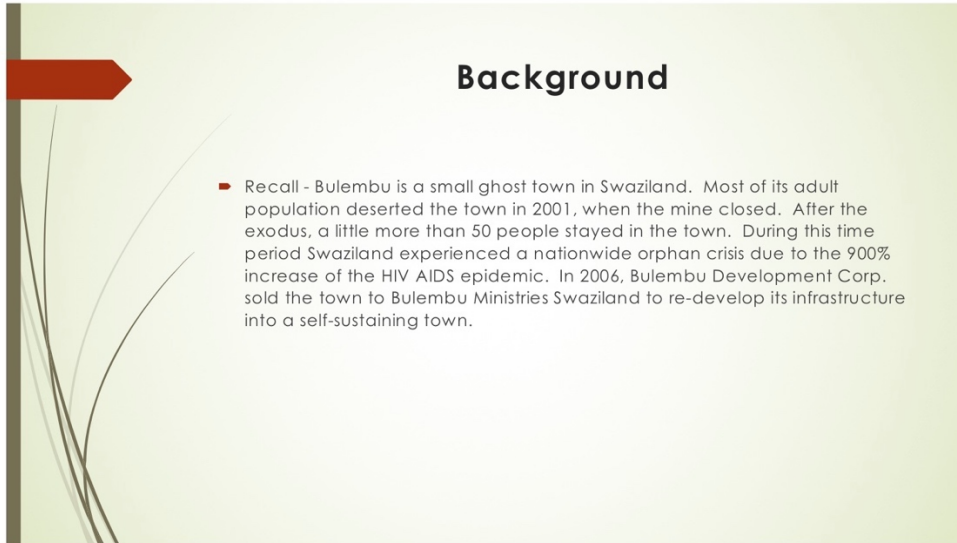
*"Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance, order, rhythm and harmony."*  
Thomas Merton

Dear Lord,  
As we spend our days learning and reviewing well-established processes, let us not forget how to think for ourselves. Help us to use our minds to find new and innovative ways to help solve not only our own problems but also to solve the problems of society such as injustice and poverty. Remind us that our true happiness is found not in what we do for ourselves but in what we do for others.  
Amen

**Order: Jenga activity**

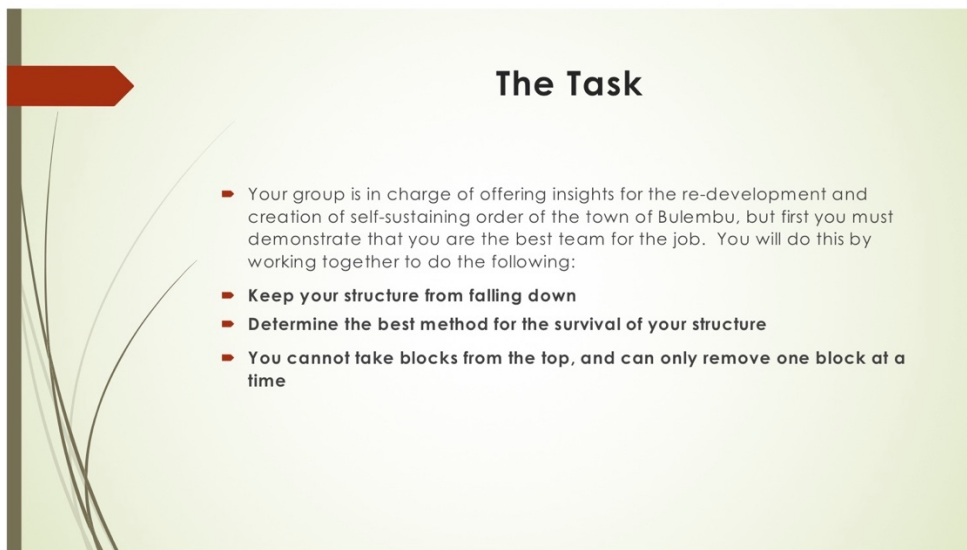
**Purpose:** Use communication and collaborative skills to establish a society that is able to be sustainable. Your Jenga tower will be a metaphor for your society. Collaborate and communicate together to keep your society standing.

## 2. Powerpoint slides (Order): 4/6; slides 3 & 4



### Background

- Recall - Bulembu is a small ghost town in Swaziland. Most of its adult population deserted the town in 2001, when the mine closed. After the exodus, a little more than 50 people stayed in the town. During this time period Swaziland experienced a nationwide orphan crisis due to the 900% increase of the HIV AIDS epidemic. In 2006, Bulembu Development Corp. sold the town to Bulembu Ministries Swaziland to re-develop its infrastructure into a self-sustaining town.



### The Task

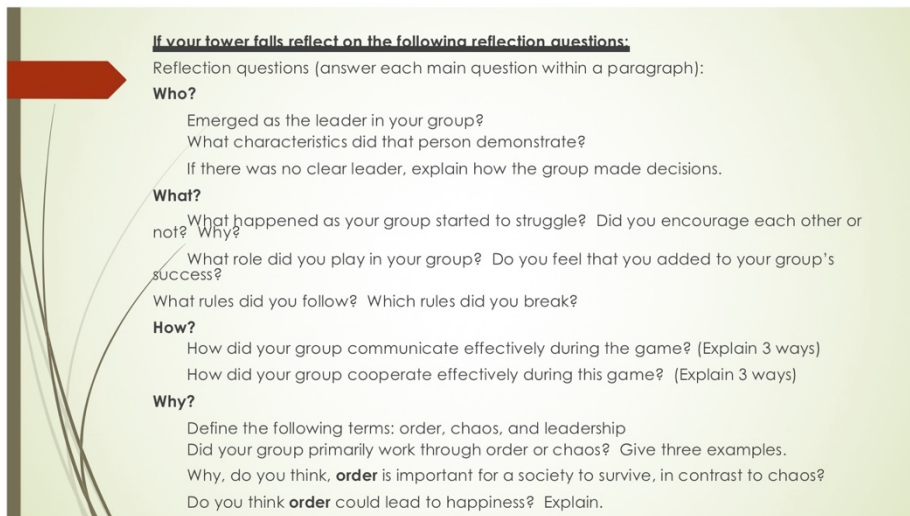
- Your group is in charge of offering insights for the re-development and creation of self-sustaining order of the town of Bulembu, but first you must demonstrate that you are the best team for the job. You will do this by working together to do the following:
  - **Keep your structure from falling down**
  - **Determine the best method for the survival of your structure**
  - **You cannot take blocks from the top, and can only remove one block at a time**

### 3. Powerpoint slides (Order): 6/6; slides 5 & 6



## The Rules

- Before you begin playing Jenga, you must establish rules that will serve the survival of your society.
- List three rules: (briefly explain why your group chose these rules).
- You will have 5 minutes to establish the rules



**If your tower falls reflect on the following reflection questions:**

Reflection questions (answer each main question within a paragraph):

**Who?**

- Emerged as the leader in your group?
- What characteristics did that person demonstrate?
- If there was no clear leader, explain how the group made decisions.

**What?**

- What happened as your group started to struggle? Did you encourage each other or not? Why?
- What role did you play in your group? Do you feel that you added to your group's success?
- What rules did you follow? Which rules did you break?

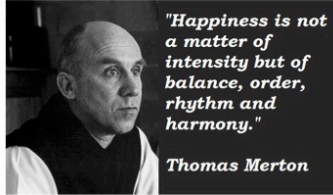
**How?**

- How did your group communicate effectively during the game? (Explain 3 ways)
- How did your group cooperate effectively during this game? (Explain 3 ways)

**Why?**

- Define the following terms: order, chaos, and leadership
- Did your group primarily work through order or chaos? Give three examples.
- Why, do you think, **order** is important for a society to survive, in contrast to chaos?
- Do you think **order** could lead to happiness? Explain.

#### 4. Worksheet handout (Order): 1/2 pages



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rev of God. Pt II - Mr. Malewitz

Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Order: Jenga activity**

**Purpose:** Use communication and collaborative skills to establish a society that is able to be sustainable. Your Jenga tower will be a metaphor for your society. Collaborate and communicate together to keep your society standing.

**Background:** Recall - Bulembu is a small ghost town in Swaziland. Most of its adult population deserted the town in 2001, when the mine closed. After the exodus, a little more than 50 people stayed in the town. During this time period Swaziland experienced a nationwide orphan crisis due to the 900% increase of the HIV AIDS epidemic. In 2006, Bulembu Development Corp. sold the town to Bulembu Ministries Swaziland to re-develop its infrastructure into a self-sustaining town.

**The task:** Your group is in charge of offering insights for the re-development and creation of self-sustaining order of the town of Bulembu.

- 1) **Keep your structure from falling down**
- 2) **Determine the best method for survival**
- 3) **You cannot take blocks from the top, and can only remove one block at a time**

Before you begin playing Jenga, you must establish rules that will serve the survival of your society. List three rules below: (briefly explain why your group chose these rules)

1.

2.

3.

Activities adapted from Survival game & Last Tower Standing with permission from Beatriz Pacheco, Ed.D., 2018



## 5. Worksheet handouts (Order): 2/2 pages

### **If your tower falls reflect on the following reflection questions:**

Reflection questions (answer each main question within a paragraph):

#### **Who?**

Emerged as the leader?

What characteristics did that person demonstrate?

If there was no clear leader, explain how the group made decisions?

#### **What?**

What happened as your group started to struggle? Did you encourage each other or not? Why?

What role did you play in your group? Why?

What rules did you follow? Which rules did you break?

#### **How?**

How did your group communicate effectively during the game? (Explain 3 ways)

How did your group cooperate effectively during this game? (Explain 3 ways)

#### **Why?**

Define the following terms: order, chaos, and leadership

Did your group primarily work through order or chaos? Give three examples.

Why, do you think, **order** is important for a society to survive, in contrast to chaos?

Do you think **order** could lead to happiness? Explain.

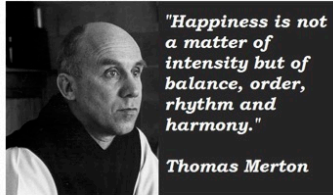
#### **Final recommendations:**

Your group now needs to send recommendations to Bulembu Ministries Swaziland. What are the three most important insights your group would share to the committee of Bulembu Ministries Swaziland to help re-develop and sustain the town and community of Bulembu in the future?

Activities adapted from Survival game & Last Tower Standing with permission from Beatriz Pacheco, Ed.D., 2018

## APPENDIX B: Curriculum artifacts: Balance

### 1. Worksheet handout (Balance): 1/2 pages



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rev of God. Pt II - Mr. Malewitz

Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Balance: Mindfulness Meditation**

**Purpose:** Find personal balance and peace through a meditative experience. Describe that experience.

#### **Pre-meditation questions:**

- How do you feel, right now?
- What events, expectations, people or actions are creating stress in your life?
- Have those events, expectations, people or actions effected any of your relationships?
- Do you feel weighted down by something?
- What would you like to let go of most right now?

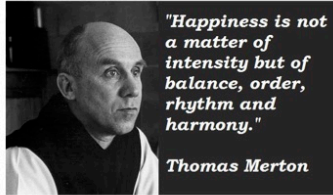
#### **Post-meditation questions:**

- How did you feel during the experience?
- How do you feel after the experience?
- Were you able to still your mind?
- Was it easy or challenging?
- Would you like to meditate again in the future?



## APPENDIX C: Curriculum artifacts: Rhythm

### 1. Worksheet handout (Rhythm): 1/2 pages



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rev of God. Pt II - Mr. Malewitz

Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Rhythm: In beat with the whole**

**Purpose:** Understand the importance of rhythm in collaboration. Describe that experience.

#### Experience

Reflect on the experience of being part of a drum circle or reflect on the film clips of musicians (Walk off the Earth or Don Ross/Calum Graham) working together to produce a song, as musicians in unity.

#### Reflection questions:

##### Clip #1:

- How did the musicians use the instruments to work together?
- How did the musicians listen, watch, keep rhythm with each other?
- What would have happened if they feel out of rhythm?

#### Reflection questions:

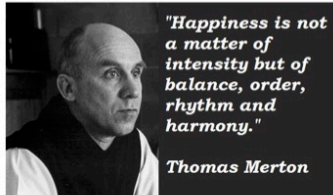
##### Clip #2:

- How did the musicians use the instruments to work together?
- How did the musicians listen, watch, keep rhythm with each other?
- What would have happened if they feel out of rhythm?



## APPENDIX D: Curriculum artifacts: Harmony

### 1. Worksheet handout: 1/1 page



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rev of God. Pt II - Mr. Malewitz

Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Harmony: Reflections on *The Human Experience* and personal service experiences**

**Purpose:** Community is an essential aspect of the human experience. This activity is to reflect on your personal experiences with service and understanding the dignity of the human person.

**Background:** Recall – the film, *The Human Experience*, Jeff, Cliff, Matthew, and Mike went to three different cultural experiences to understand others better: streets of New York City, an orphanage in Peru, and HIV AIDS and leper victims in Ghana. You also experienced service of others throughout the expectations of freshmen service program.

**The task:** Reflect on the experiences in the film and your experience on the following questions to contribute to the class Socratic dialogue.

#### **Reflection questions to journal about before the class discussion:**

- Define: harmony, discord, and community
- In the film, *The Human Experience*, Jeff, Cliff, Matthew, and Mike met various groups of people. Name one experience that stood out to you about their experiences and the people they met. Explain.
- How did Jeff, Cliff, Matthew, or Mike treat the people they met? Support your reason.
- How did Jeff's experiences help him in his own relationships? Explain.
- You experienced 6 hours of service – name one organization you helped. What does that organization offer? What did you do?
- Who did you meet during your service experience? What did you learn?
- How has service work helped your relationship with others?

*APPENDIX E: Additional Documentation*

**1. Merton Legacy Trust approval of use of material from unpublished letter (Nov. 7, 1959) of Thomas Merton, page 1/2**

(Form C)

Date 6/28/10

Anne McCormick, Trustee  
The Merton Legacy Trust  
670 West End Avenue, 14E  
New York, New York 10025

Re: Merton Legacy Trust

Dear Anne McCormick:

To you as a Trustee of the Merton Legacy Trust, I request the following designated permission in connection with a book dissertation essay which I am writing on the work of Thomas Merton:

- to examine
- to copy or film
- to quote in part or extensively, or
- to publish or reprint

from the materials itemized as follows (use reverse of this sheet if necessary):

*• personal letter of Thomas Merton to Charles VAN DORAN, NOV 7, 1959 (2 pgs)*

I agree that in the event said permission is granted:

1. I will submit to you a list of the passages that I wish to quote or paraphrase.
2. If there is to be publication, in magazine or book form, or if a dissertation is to be duplicated for even limited circulation, or microfilmed by any library, or by University Microfilms, or any other similar service, I agree to negotiate permission to publish with you and to pay such fees for this right as you may determine.
3. In the case of a dissertation, I agree that I will copyright it with the Copyright Office in Washington, and that when I have received the certificate of copyright I will then execute an assignment to the Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust, and that I will then register this assignment at my own expense, at the Copyright Office, and will send the registration of assignment Certificate to Anne McCormick of the Merton Legacy Trust.
4. In the case of magazine publication, I agree that I will stipulate to the publisher of the magazine that, after the issue of the magazine has been copyrighted in the usual way, an assignment of copyright in that part of the magazine that consists of quotations from the unpublished work of Thomas Merton will be executed to the Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust without charge; that assignment will be registered at the Publisher's expense at the Copyright Office, and that the certificate of registration of the assignment, together with a copy of the assignment itself, will be sent to the Merton Legacy Trust.
5. In the case of book publication, or if a dissertation is later published as a book, I agree to negotiate permissions with you for the basic U.S. book publication rights, and for reprint, British and foreign language rights as well, if these rights are to be included in my book contract with the publisher, and to stipulate to the publisher of my book that the publisher take out and pay for a separate copyright, with appropriate notice on the copyright page, for quotations from the unpublished work of Thomas Merton in the name of the Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust, and that the publisher will send the certificate of registration from this copyright to the Merton Legacy Trust.

1. Merton Legacy Trust approval of use of material from unpublished letter (Nov. 7, 1959) of Thomas Merton, page 2/2

(Form C)

6. I understand that the Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust can grant permission only for quotations from unpublished work by Merton and for quotations from magazine pieces not yet collected in book form on which rights are controlled by the author, and I agree to obtain permission for the use of quotations from books by Merton published by other publishers from such publishers, and further, to stipulate to the publisher of my book that the appropriate earlier copyright lines covering such book publications be reproduced as provided by the U. S. copyright law.
7. I agree to return to the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, when I have finished my work, any microfilm or other copies of Merton material which have been supplied to me, and
8. I covenant that I will not make copies of any copies of Merton material supplied to me by the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, or permit any third party to make copies.
9. I also covenant to send the Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust three copies, and to the Thomas Merton Center three copies, a total of six copies then of all publications incorporating or resulting from the use of Merton's materials.

It is my specific understanding that in granting the above requested permission, the Thomas Merton Legacy Trust does not surrender the right to print the material, or to give permission to others to print it, that the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University and all of the Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust do not in any way assume responsibility for infringement of copyright, or of the publication rights in the manuscripts held by Thomas Merton, his heirs, beneficiaries, executors, assigns and or trustees, and I full understand that I will be PERSONALLY liable for any violation of the rights belonging to Thomas Merton.

Name (print) Thomas E. Malewitz

Signature *Thomas E. Malewitz*

Requested permission granted this 15<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2016

The Thomas Merton Legacy Trust

BY: *Anne H. McCormick* Trustee  
Trustee, Merton Legacy Trust

If this request is limited to examination of materials in the Thomas Merton Center, the Director of the Center will grant permission in the name of the Trust. Any other request, i.e. to quote in part or extensively or to publish and reprint this form should be mailed with an original and a copy, both signed, with a signed copy of Form A to Anne McCormick, 670 West End Avenue, 14F, New York, New York 10025.



## 2. Student/parent consent form for participation in the study (redacted), page 1/2



### NO ONE IS AN ISLAND: STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF A CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM RESPONSE TO BULLYING, BASED ON THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MERTON

#### Subject Informed Consent

##### Introduction and Background Information

You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted by Dr. Daniel Castner and Mr. Thomas Malewitz. The study is sponsored by the Department of Education at Bellarmine University. The study will take place at [REDACTED] 24 subjects will be invited to participate in this study. Your participation in this study will last for 10 class sessions, which will occur during theology course meeting times during regular scheduled school days.

##### Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to explore student experiences of a first iteration curriculum response to bullying for Catholic high schools. Bullying has become an epidemic. Many responses to bullying offered in schools focus on physical and emotional effects of bullying but do not include a spiritual component. Catholic schools have the opportunity to address bullying from a holistic perspective: physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, and spiritual well-being. This study would explore male adolescent student knowledge of bullying and how it affects the dignity of others, as well as the students' experiences of a curriculum response to bullying from a Catholic perspective, based on the writing of Thomas Merton.

##### Procedures

In this study, you will be asked to engage in normal theology classroom activities which would include writing personal reflections, group conversations, and group-centered activities such as: reflections on service experiences, group drumming, meditation, and reading and reflecting on theological texts and poems. The 10-day sessions would occur during regularly scheduled theology class (49 min period) and will follow the Catholic high school curriculum standards. As a participant in this study, you have the right to refuse to answer any reflection question that would make you feel uncomfortable.

##### Potential Risks

There are no fore-seeable risks associated with this study that would be greater than a typical theology classroom experience. The conversation, activities, questions and dialogue include topics that are part of the high school curriculum for theology classes in a Catholic school and would normally be discussed throughout the course of the school year. If, during the study, a student feels troubled by the content of bullying or other material in this curriculum study school counselors will be available for students.

##### Benefits

The possible benefits of this study include a new perspective to address bullying in Catholic education. This study may help adolescents recognize a greater dignity of the human person, especially individuals who are labeled and bullied in school. The study may also help students develop a greater social justice awareness toward situations of societal bullying. Although the data collected in this study may not benefit you directly. However, the information learned from this research may be helpful to others in the future.

Bellarmino University | 2001 Newburg Road | Louisville, Ky 40205 | PHONE 502.272.8191 | www.bellarmino.edu

Date written: March 23, 2018

Page 1 of 2

## 2. Student/parent consent form for participation in the study (redacted), page 2/2

No one is an island: **Subject Informed Consent**

### **Confidentiality**

Although absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by law. The study sponsor or the Institutional Review Board may inspect your research records. Should the data collected in this research study be published, your identity will not be revealed.

Data for the study will be collected through observations, field notes, artifacts (writing samples), transcriptions of conversations, and informal follow-up questions. Should the study be published, all personal identification will be removed, and a pseudonym will be used to protect the identity of the participants and school.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw your consent at any time without penalty.

### **Your Rights as a Research Subject and Contact Persons**

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Institutional Review Board Office at 502.272.8032. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions, in confidence, with a member of the Board. This is an independent committee composed of members of the University community and lay members of the community not connected with this institution. The Board has reviewed this study.

You acknowledge that all your present questions have been answered in language you can understand. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Daniel Castner, Ph.D. (Bellarmine University) or Thomas Malewitz (Bellarmine University Ph.D. candidate [REDACTED]).

### **Consent**

For accuracy in data and research during the observations, I understand that the sessions will be video recorded for later transcription. The video file will be destroyed at the conclusion of the transcription process.

I understand that the data collected and analyzed from this study will be used for publication in a dissertation and may be used in a truncated version for scholarly articles or presentations.

You have discussed the above information and hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this study. You have been given a signed copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

Bellarmino University | 2001 Newburg Road | Louisville, Ky 40205 | PHONE 502.272.8191 | www.bellarmino.edu

Date written: March 23, 2018

Page 2 of 2

## References

- Abeles, V., & Congdon, J. (Writers). (2009). *Race to nowhere: The dark side of America's achievement culture*. Lafayette, CA: Reel Link Films.
- Abeles, V., & Rubenstein, G. (2015). *Beyond measure: rescuing an overscheduled, overtested, underestimated generation*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Ali, L. (2017). What Thomas Merton and Muhammad Ali had in common. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/17/opinion/what-thomas-merton-and-muhammad-ali-had-in-common.html>
- Amodei, M. (Ed.) (2015). *Jesus and the Church: One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic* (student ed., pp. 97-100). Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, Inc.
- Anslinger, L. (2002). Demonstrating and Measuring Success in Religious Education. *Momentum*, (February/March 2002), 59-60.
- Aprile, D. (1998). *The abbey of Gethsemani place of peace and paradox: 150 years in the life of America's oldest Trappist monastery*. Stratford, ON: Trout Lily Press.
- Arnold, E. (1995). *Why we live in community: with two interpretive talks by Thomas Merton*. (3rd Ed.). Walden, NY: Plough Publishing House.
- Asher, J. (2011). *Thirteen Reasons Why*. United States: Razorbill.
- Ashfield, R. (2015). Religious potential of the child. *Humanum: Issues in family, culture & science*. Retrieved from <http://humanumreview.com/articles/religious-potential-of-the-child>
- Atkinson, M. C. (2013). *Transcript of interview with Suzanne Butorovich*. Unpublished manuscript.

- Atkinson, M. C. (Director). (2015). *The many stories and last days of Thomas Merton* [Film]. United States: Duckworks.
- Axelson, R. D., & Flick, A. (2010). Defining student engagement. *Change: The magazine of higher learning*, 43(1), 38-43.
- Ayers, J. W., Althouse, B. M., Lease, E. C., Dreze, M., & Allem, J. P. (2017). Internet searches for suicide following the release of *13 Reasons Why*. *JAMA Internal Medicine*. Retrieved from <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2646773>
- Backus, I. (2017). The Church Fathers and the Humanities in the Renaissance and the Reformation. In J. Zimmermann (Ed.), *Re-envisioning Christian Humanism: Education and the restoration of humanity*. (pp. 33-54). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baessler, E. J. (2015). Meditation in the classroom: Cultivating attention and insight. *Listening Education*, 1(6), 8-15.
- Barron, R. (Writer), & Leonard, M. (Director). (2011). Happy are we: The teachings of Jesus [Television series episode]. In *Catholicism*. Chicago, IN: Word on Fire.
- Barron, R. (2012). The seven great qualities of a new evangelist. *Word on Fire*. Retrieved from <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/video/the-seven-great-qualities-of-a-new-evangelist/254/>
- Bauerlein, M. (Ed.) (2011). *The Digital Divide: Arguments for and Against Facebook, Google, Texting, and the Age of Social Networking*. New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin.
- Baumbach, G. F. (2017). *The way of catechesis: Exploring our history, renewing our ministry*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press.
- Bell, R. (2005). Transcript of NOOMA Noise 005. Retrieved from [http://storage.cloversites.com/gracechurch10/documents/005\\_Noise-text.pdf](http://storage.cloversites.com/gracechurch10/documents/005_Noise-text.pdf)

- Berzsenyi, C. (2004). "We're Just Kidding": Sexual Obscenities in Classroom Chat and Teaching about Audience. *Writing Instructor*, (2004). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ824624.pdf>
- Block, A. A. (2007). *Pedagogy, religion, and practice: Reflections on ethics and teaching*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Block, A. A. (2014). *The classroom: Encounter and engage*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bobbitt, F. (1921/1983). The actual objectives of the present-day high school. *American Journal of Education*, 91(4, Aug., 1983), 450-467.
- Bond, M. (2014). *The power of others: Peer pressure, groupthink, and how people around us shape everything we do*. London: Oneworld.
- Boske, C. (2015a). Bridge building. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (pp. 281-303). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Boske, C. (2015b). Bullied: What's going on? In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (pp. 1-22). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Boske, C., & Osanloo, A. (2015). Uncomfortable truths: An introduction to bullying in U.S. schools. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (p. xiii-xxiii). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Bresler, L. (1994). Zooming in on the Qualitative Paradigm in Art Education: Educational Criticism, Ethnography, and Action Research. *Visual Arts Research*, 20(1), 1-19.
- Brueggemann, W. (1979). Covenanting as human vocation: A discussion of the relation of Bible and pastoral care. *Interpretation – Journal of Bible and Theology* 33(2), 115-129.

- Brueggemann, W. (2017). *Sabbath as resistance: Saying NO to the culture of now* (Revised ed.). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Cahn, S. M. (2012). *Classic and contemporary readings in the philosophy of education* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Canales, A. D. (2011). *A noble quest: Cultivating spirituality in Catholic adolescents*. Waco, TX: PCG Legacy.
- Candyrat Records. (2013, July 16). Callum Graham & Don Ross - Hey Ya! [video file] Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HGmgPGyGm4>
- Carr, A. E. (1988). *A search for wisdom & spirit: Thomas Merton's theology of self*. Notre Dame, IN: Univeristy of Notre Dame Press.
- Carr, N. (2011). *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to our Brains*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Comp.
- Carrón, J. (2016). An original presence. 'Page one' of *Traces* (March 2016), 1-16. Retrieved from [http://english.clonline.org/default.asp?id=559&id\\_n=21267](http://english.clonline.org/default.asp?id=559&id_n=21267)
- Casagram, M. (2014). In search of a hidden wholeness. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo, (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 253-254). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*. (2000). Washington, D.C.: USCCB.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Youth risk behavior surveillance-United States, 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 65(6). Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506\\_updated.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506_updated.pdf)
- Challenge Ministries Swaziland. (2018). Swaziland, Africa. Retrieved from <https://cmswazi.org/about-story-continue/>

- Chauvet, L. M. (2001). *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the mercy of the body* (M. Beaumont, Trans.). Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.
- Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce: *Investigation of Television Quiz Shows*, House, 86<sup>th</sup> Cong. 1 (1959) (Testimony of Charles Van Doren).
- Conger, K. J., Williams, S.T., Little, W.M., Masyn, K.E., & Shebloski, B. (2009). Development of mastery during adolescence: The role of family problem-solving. *Journal of Health & Social Behavior*, 50(1), 99-114.
- Convey, J. (2010). *What Do Our Children Know About Their Faith? Results from the ACRE Assessment*. Arlington, VA: National Catholic Educational Association.
- Convey, J., & Thompson, A. (1999). *Assessment of Catholic religious education: Weaving Christ's seamless garment*. Washington, D.C.: NCEA.
- Correal, A., Dickerson, C., Fortin, J., Wolfe, J., Baumgaertner, E., Cochrane, E., . . . Ueno, H. (2018). March for our lives updates: Students protesting guns say 'enough is enough.' *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/24/us/march-for-our-lives.html>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Croghan, R. V. (2018). Mahanambhrata Brahmachari and Thomas Merton. *The Merton Seasonal*, 43(2), 3-10.
- Crompton, S. W. (2004). *Thomas Merton*. Philadelphia, PA: Chelsea House Publishers.
- Daggy, R. (1980). Editorial: Dan Walsh and Thomas Merton. *The Merton Seasonal*, 5(2), 2.

- Dean, K. C. (2004). *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Dean, K. C. (2010). *Almost Christian: What the faith of our teenagers is telling the American Church*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Delgatto, L. (Ed.) (2005). *Catholic youth ministry: The essential documents*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press.
- Del Prete, T. (1990). *Thomas Merton and the education of the whole person*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.
- Del Prete, T. (1991). Thomas Merton on Mark Van Doren: A portrait of teaching and spiritual growth. *Merton Seasonal*, 16.1(Winter 1991), 16-18.
- Del Prete, T. (2010). *Improving the odds: Developing powerful teaching practice and a culture of learning in urban high schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Distefano, A. (1980). Dan Walsh's influence on the spirituality of Thomas Merton. *The Merton Seasonal*, 5(2), 4-13.
- Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*. (2008). Washington, D.C.: USCCB.
- Dysinger, L. (Trans.) (2003). *The rule of Saint Benedict: Latin & English*. Santa Ana, CA: Source Books.
- Eisner, E. W. (1976). Educational connoisseurship and criticism: Their form and functions in educational evaluation. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 10(3/4), 135-150.
- Eisner, E. W. (1987). Educating the whole person: Arts in the curriculum. *Music Educators Journal*, 73(8), 37-41.
- Eisner, E. W. (1992). Objectivity in educational research. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 22(1), 9-15.



- Eisner, E. W. (1993). The emergence of new paradigms for educational research. *Art Education*, 46(6), 50-55.
- Eisner, E. W. (2003a). On the differences between scientific and artistic approaches to qualitative research. *Visual Arts Research*, 29(57), 5-11.
- Eisner, E. W. (2003b). Questionable assumptions about schooling. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(9), 648-657.
- Eisner, E. W. (2004). Preparing for today and tomorrow. *New Seeds, New Curriculum*, 61(4), 6-10.
- Engebretson, K. (2006). God's got your back: Teenage boys talk about God. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 11(3), 329-345.
- Erikson, E. H. (1993). *Childhood and society*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Evert, J., Evert, C., & Butler, B. (2006). *Theology of the body for teens: Discovering God's plan for love and life*. West Chester, PA: Ascension Press.
- Finley, J. (2003). *Merton's palace of nowhere: 25th anniversary ed.* Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press.
- Flinders, D. J., & Eisner, E. W. (1994). Educational criticism as a form of qualitative inquiry. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 28(4), 341-357.
- Foshay, A. W. (Ed.) (1980). *Considered action for curriculum improvement*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Foshay, A. W. (2000). *The curriculum: Purpose, substance, practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Francis. (2013). *Apostolic exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

- Francis. (2014). Address of Pope Francis to students and teachers from schools across Italy.  
Retrieved from  
[https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco\\_20140510\\_mondo-della-scuola.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140510_mondo-della-scuola.html)
- Francis. (2015, September 24). Visit to the joint session of the United States Congress: Address of the Holy Father. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from  
[https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150924\\_usa-us-congress.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150924_usa-us-congress.html)
- Franklin, R. W., & Shaw, J. M. (1991). *The case of Christian humanism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Freeman, M. (2015, September 5). 20 minute silent meditation. Retrieved from  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XenTtjaQuSM> [audio/visual clip]
- Fusch, P. I., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2017). How to conduct a mini-ethnographic case study: A guide for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(3), 923-941.
- Galas, J. (1994). *Teen suicide*. Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books.
- Galdas, P. (2017). Revisiting bias in qualitative research: Reflections on its relationship with funding and impact. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16, 1-2.
- Garbarino, J., & deLara, E. (2002). *And words can hurt forever: How to protect adolescents from bullying harassment, and emotional violence*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Giussani, L. (2001). *The risk of education: Discovering our ultimate destiny*. (R. M. G. Frongia, Trans.) New York, NY: Crossroads Publishing Company.
- Giussani, L. (2006). *The journey to Truth is an experience* (J. Z. P. Stevenson, Trans.). London: McGill-Queen's University Press.

- Goalcast. (2017, December 17). How to use your mind – Neil deGrasse Tyson – Goalcast.  
Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=O\\_\\_0onk4Iwo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=O__0onk4Iwo)
- Granger Book Co. Editorial Board. (1983). Mark Van Doren from *Survey of American poetry: Interval between world wars 1920-1939* (Vol. 8, pp. 146-150). Great Neck, NY: Granger Book Co.
- Grayson, D. (2009). *Monastic in his [own] way: Thomas Merton and Leonard Cohen*. Paper presented at the Presidential Address/International Thomas Merton Society – 11<sup>th</sup> General Meeting and Conference, Nazareth College, Rochester, NY.
- Grayston, D. (2015). *Thomas Merton and the noonday demon: The Camaldoli correspondence*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Greenfield, S. (2015). *Mind change: How digital technologies are leaving their mark on our brains*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Groome, T. (1998). *Educating for life: A spiritual vision for every teacher and parent*. Allen, TX: Thomas More.
- Groome, T. (1999). *Christian Religious education: Sharing our story and vision*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gurian, M. (2017). *Saving our sons: A new path for raising healthy and resilient boys*. Spokane, WA: Gurian Institute Press.
- Haley, J. (1993). *Uncommon Therapy: The Psychiatric Techniques of Milton H. Erickson, M.D.* New York: WW Norton & Company.

- Hawton, K., Rodham, K., Evans, E., & Weatherall, R. (2002). Deliberate self harm in adolescents: self report survey in schools in England. *British Medical Journal*, 325(23 NOVEMBER 2002), 1207-1211.
- Heft, J. L. (2011). *Catholic High Schools: Facing New Realities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Henderson, J. G., & Kesson, K. R. (2004). *Curriculum wisdom: Educational decisions in democratic societies*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Henderson, J. G., & Gornik, R. (2007). *Transformative curriculum leadership*. Upper Saddle River: NJ: Pearson.
- Henry, G., & Montaldo, J. (Eds.) (2014). *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope*. Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Hilbert, M., & Lopez, P. (2011). The world's technological capacity to store, communicate and computer information. *Science*, 332(6025), 60-65.
- Hirsch, L. (Director). (2012). *Bully* [FILM]. United States: The Weinstein Company.
- Hittinger, F. R. (2017). From institutions to anthropology: The Christian humanism of John Paul II and the crisis of modern times. In J. Zimmermann (Ed.), *Re-envisioning Christian Humanism: Education and the restoration of humanity*. (pp. 239-252). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hoffman, M. B. (2011). *Catechesis in a Multimedia World: Connecting to Today's Students*. New York, NY: Paulist Press.
- Horan, D. P. (2011). Digital natives and the digital self: The wisdom of Thomas Merton for millennial spirituality and self-understanding. *The Merton Annual* 24(2011): 83-111.

- Horan, D. P. (2014a). *The Franciscan heart of Thomas Merton: A new look at the spiritual inspiration of his life, thought, and writing*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press.
- Horan, D. P. (2014b). Seeing the world as it really is: The prophetic legacy of Thomas Merton. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 57-63). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Hove, M. J., & Risen, J. L. (2009). It's all in the timing: Interpersonal synchrony increases affiliation. *Social Cognition*, 27(6), 949-961.
- Hudnall, A. (2015). The quiet roar. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in school* (pp. 193-197). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Huggins, M. (2016). Stigma is the origin of bullying. *Journal of Catholic Education* 19 (3). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce/vol19/iss3/9/>
- Hull, A. (2013). *Rhythmical alchemy playshop: Volume #1, Drum circle games*. Santa Cruz, CA: Village Music Circles.
- Incaprera, J. (Producer). (2017). *13 Reasons Why* [Television series]. California, US: Netflix.
- Ivarsson-Jansson, E., Cooper, K., Augusen, H., & Fryland, M. (2009). More like real life- Motivational methods of teaching in upper secondary schools. *US-China Education Review*, 6(11), 46-56.
- Jackson, P. W. (1975). Shifting visions of the curriculum: Notes on the aging of Franklin Bobbitt. *The Elementary School Journal*, 75(75th Anniversary Issue), 118-133.
- John Paul II. (1979). *Catechesi tradendae: On catechesis on our time* Retrieved from [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_16101979\\_catechesi-tradendae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html)
- Karpov, Y. V. (2014). *Vygotsky for educators*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Kelly, J. M. (2010). *Building men who matter: On the marvel and mystery of raising teenage boys*. Louisville, KY: Butler Books.
- Kennedy, R. F., (1968, April 4). *Statement on the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.*  
Retrieved from <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/Ready-Reference/RFK-Speeches/Statement-on-the-Assassination-of-Martin-Luther-King.aspx>
- Kindlon, D., & Thompson, M. (2000). *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- King, M. L. (1968, April 3). *I've been to the mountaintop [The Memphis Sanitation Strike speech]*. Retrieved from <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm>
- King, M. L. (1967, April 4). *Beyond Vietnam: A time to break silence [The Riverside Church speech]*. Retrieved from <https://www.commondreams.org/views04/0115-13.htm>
- Kinnane, C. (Director). (2008/2011). *The Human Experience*. Brooklyn, NY: Grassroots Films.
- Kyriakides, L., Kaloyirou, C., & Lindsay, G. (2006). An analysis of the revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire using the Rasch measurement model. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 76*(4), 781-801.
- Labrie, R. (2001). *Thomas Merton and the inclusive imagination*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press.
- Leiner, M., Dwivedi, A. K., Villanos, M. T., Singh, N., Blunk, D., & Peinado, J. (2014). Psychosocial profile of bullies, victims, and bully-victims: a cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Pediatrics, 21*. doi:10.3389/fped.2014.00001.
- Leitch, D. (Director). (2018). *Deadpool 2*. United States: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox.
- Leonard, E. K. (2014). *The battle against juvenile bullying: The plague of child and teen*

- bullying in the schools and how to stop it*. Atlanta, GA: Anaphora Literary Press.
- Lenoir, A. (2017). What would Thomas Merton make of Trump, climate change and Twitter? *America: The Jesuit Review*. Retrieved from <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/10/03/what-would-thomas-merton-make-trump-climate-change-and-twitter>
- Letaf, A. L. (2015). Grace insists. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 134-136). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Liou, J. (2012). Aids orphanage revives Swazi ghost town. *IOL*. Retrieved from <https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/aids-orphanage-revives-swazi-ghost-town-1262686>
- Lispey, R. (2015). *Make peace before the sun goes down: The long encounter of Thomas Merton and his abbot, James Fox*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Living as missionary disciples: National directory for catechesis worksheets*. (2017). Washington, D.C.: USCCB.
- Lorie, S. B., Kritikos, E. P., Messerer, J., & LeDosquet, P. (2007). *Curriculum infusion of real life issues: Curriculum infusion of real life issues for students with exceptionality*. Retrieved from <http://www.cirli.org/uploads/3/9/4/0/39403265/exceptionalitymonograph.pdf>
- Loughrey, G. (2013). The spiritual lives of teenagers & Thomas Merton. *Contemplative Journal*. Retrieved from <http://contemplativejournal.com/spiritual-lives-teenagers/>
- Lukefahr, O. (2002). *The search for happiness: Four levels of emotional and spiritual growth*. Liguori, MO: Liguori/Triumph.
- Luxton, D. D., June, J. D., & Fairall, J. M. (2012). Social media and suicide: A public health perspective. *American Journal of Public Health, 102*(2), S195-S200.
- Madden, J. (2006). Verification of a living proposal. *Traces 8*(7), 1.

- Malewitz, T. (2013). Who am I? Why am I here? Revisiting *Renewing the Vision* and contemporary challenges of Catholic adolescents - with possible solutions. *Momentum* 44(4), 23-25.
- Malewitz, T. & Pacheco, B. (2016). Living solidarity: Helping students with learning differences develop dignity for all humanity. *Journal of Catholic Education* 20(1), 324-332.
- Mann, J., Kelly, G., McMillan, H., Frank, T., & Ditrich, V. (2011, November 28). BULEMBU - The song and the story. Retrieved from <https://sotw.ca/bulembu>
- Marcia, J. E., Waterman, A. S., Matteson, D. R., Archer, S. L., & Orlofsky, J. L. (1993). *Ego identity: A handbook for psychological research*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.
- Martin, J. (2006). *Becoming who you are: Insights on the true self from Thomas Merton and other Saints*. Boston, MA: HiddenSprings.
- Marzano, R. J. (2007). *The art and science of teaching: A comprehensive framework for effective instruction*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Mata, J. (2013). Meditation: Using it in the classroom. In W. v. Moer, D. A. Celik, & J. L. Hochheimer (Eds.), *Spirituality in the 21st century: Journeys beyond entrenched boundaries* (pp. 109-119). Oxford, United Kingdom: Inter-Disciplinary Press.
- Mattingly, R. (1995). Primal pulse. *Percussive Notes*(August 1995), 8-20.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- McCaslin, S. (2014). Thomas Merton, citizen of the world, or why Merton matters now. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 38-42). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.



- McCrary, B. S. (2015). *Men's ministries: Creating sacred circles to re-build urban communities*. Pittsburgh, PA: M2M Productions.
- McDonnell, T. P. (1967). An interview with Thomas. *Motive* (October 1967), 32-42.
- McGuiness, T. M., & Keltner, N.L. (2011). Child and adolescent psychiatric nursing. In N. L. Keltner, C. E. Bostrom, & T. M. McGuiness (Eds.), *Psychiatric Nursing* (6th ed., pp. 459-468). St. Louis, MO: Elsevier Mosby.
- McKinney, S. J. (2011). A rationale for Catholic schools. In L. Franchi & S. McKinney (Eds.), *A companion to Catholic education* (pp. 147-161). Leominster, UK: Gracewing.
- Meatyrd, R. E. (1991). *Father Louie: Photographs of Thomas Merton* (B. Magid Ed.). New York, NY: Timken Publishers.
- Mercadante, F. (2012). *Engaging a new generation: A vision for reaching Catholic teens*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.
- Meredith, K. (2015). The power to move others. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (pp. 169-188). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Merton, T. (1959, November 7). *Letter to Charles Van Doren*. The Merton Center. Louisville, KY.
- Merton, T. (1962). Original child bomb. *The collected poems of Thomas Merton* (pp. 291-302). New York, NY: New Directions.
- Merton, T. (1962/1980). Peace: A religious responsibility. In G. C. Zahn (Ed.), *The nonviolent alternative* (pp. 107-128). New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.
- Merton, T. (1964a/1966). A devout meditation in memory of Adolf Eichmann. In *Raids on the unspeakable* (pp. 45-49). New York, NY: New Directions.

- Merton, T. (1964b/1966). Message to Poets. In *Raids on the unspeakable* (pp. 155-161). New York, NY: New Directions.
- Merton, T. (1966). Letter to an innocent bystander. In *Raids on the unspeakable* (pp. 53-62). New York, NY: New Directions.
- Merton, T. (1966/2009). *Conjectures of a guilty bystander*. New York, NY: Image Books/Doubleday Religion.
- Merton, T. (1966/1979). Christian Humanism in the nuclear era. In N. B. Stone & P. Hart (Eds.), *Love and living* (pp. 151-170). San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Inc.
- Merton, T. (1967/1979). Christian Humanism. In N. B. Stone & P. Hart (Eds.), *Love and living* (pp. 135-150). San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Inc.
- Merton, T. (1967/1980). Blessed are the meek: The Christian roots of non-violence. In G. C. Zahn (Ed.), *The nonviolent alternative* (pp. 208-218). New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.
- Merton, T. (1969/1979). Learning to live. In N. B. Stone & P. Hart (Eds.), *Love and living* (pp. 3-24). San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Inc.
- Merton, T. (1971). *On Peace* (G. C. Zahn Ed.). New York, NY: The McCall Publishing Company.
- Merton, T. (1975). *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton* (N. Burton, P. Hart, & J. Laughlin Eds.). New York: New Directions.
- Merton, T. (1979). *Love and living*. (N. B. Stone & P. Hart Eds.). San Diego, CA: Harcourt.
- Merton, T. (1980a). *The collected poems of Thomas Merton*. New York, NY: New Directions.
- Merton, T. (1980b). *The nonviolent alternative* (G. C. Zahn Ed.). New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

- Merton, T. (1983). *No man is an island*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Inc.
- Merton, T. (1989). *The road to joy: Letters to old and new friends*. (R. E. Daggy Ed.) New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.
- Merton, T. (1994). *Witness to freedom: Letters in times of crisis* (W. Shannon Ed.). New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.
- Merton, T. (1995a). *Passion for peace: The social essays* (W. Shannon Ed.). New York, NY: Crossroad.
- Merton, T. (1995b). *Run to the mountain: The story of a vocation - The journals of Thomas Merton* (P. Hart Ed. Vol. 1). New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Merton, T. (1996). *Entering the silence: Becoming a monk and writer - The journals of Thomas Merton* (J. Montaldo Ed. Vol. 2). New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Merton, T. (1997/2015). Extracts from Merton's journals. In R. Lipsey, *Make peace before the sun goes down: The long encounter of Thomas Merton and his abbot, James Fox* (p. 122). Boston, MA: Shambhala. (Reprinted from *A search in solitude: The journals of Thomas Merton, Vol. 3*, p. 285, by L. S. Cunningham, 1997, San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco).
- Merton, T. (1999). *The Seven Storey Mountain: An Autobiography of Faith* (Fiftieth anniversary ed.). New York: Mariner Books.
- Merton, T. (2007). *New seeds of contemplation*. New York, NY: New Direction Books.
- Merton, T. (2010). *The way of Chang Tzu*. New York, NY: New Directions.
- Merton, T. (2012). Sermon on Trinity Sunday. On *Thomas Merton's great sermons* [Digital audio file]. Rockville, MD: Now You Know Media, Inc. (1967, May 21).
- Merton, T. (2014). *Contemplative Prayer*. New York, NY: Image Books.

- Merton, T. (2015). *Faith and violence: Christian teaching and practice*. Norte Dame, IN: University of Norte Dame Press.
- Michel, V. (1937). *The liturgy of the Church*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.
- Moll, L. C. (2014). *L.S. Vygotsky and education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Molnar-Szakacs, I., & Overy, K. (2006). Music and mirror neurons: from motion to ‘e’motion. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 2006(I), 235-241.
- Montessori, M. (1912/2015). General notes on the education of the senses. In R. N. S. Topping (Ed.), *Renewing the mind: A reader in the philosophy of Catholic education* (pp. 223-229). Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Moore, D. L. (2007). *Overcoming religious illiteracy: A cultural studies approach to the study of religion in secondary education*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moroye, C. (2009). Complementary curriculum: The work of ecologically minded teachers. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41(6), 789-811.
- Morris-Young, D. (2015). The legacy of Thomas Merton. *St. Anthony Messenger*, 122(8), 28-33.
- Moses, J. (2015). *Divine discontent: The prophetic voice of Thomas Merton*. London, UK: Bloomsbury.
- National directory for catechesis*. (2005). Washington, D.C.: USCCB Communications.
- Oaklander, M. (2018). *Om* for kids: Mindfulness and meditation exercises are helping the next generation get an edge in the classroom. *TIME: Mindfulness - The new science of health and happiness*, 28-29.
- O’Hare, P. (2018). Christ and the undivided young adult: Clues from Merton and more. *The Merton Seasonal*, 43(1), 3-11.
- Oliver, B. (2015). Bullying: Schoolhouse and workforce considerations for students and

- teachers. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (pp. 159-168). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Ong, W. J. (1981). *Fighting for Life: Contest, Sexuality, and Consciousness*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- The Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.ocso.org/who-we-are/our-spirit/>
- The Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance. (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.ocso.org/>
- Padovano, A. T. (1995). *A retreat with Thomas Merton: Becoming who we are*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- Palmer, D. (2013). *Looking at philosophy: The unbearable heaviness of philosophy made lighter* (6th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Palmer, P. (2014). A friendship, a love, a rescue. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 24-29). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Paul VI. (1963). Sacrosanctum concilium: The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy. In A. Flannery (New Revised Ed.), *Vatican Council II: Vol. 1 The conciliar and post conciliar documents*. (pp. 1-36). Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co.
- Paul VI. (1965). Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the modern world. In A. Flannery (New Revised Ed.), *Vatican Council II: Vol. 1 The conciliar and post conciliar documents*. (pp. 903-1000). Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co.
- Paul VI. (1968). *Encyclical letter: Humanae Vitae (On human life)*. Retrieved from [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_25071968\\_humanae-vitae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html)

- Peach, R. (2014). Playing bongos with Merton. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 86-91). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Pearson, P. (2014). Forward. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 15-18). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Peterson, H. (2009). Experience: A discovery of an event that requires a teacher. In *The EdConference: The Risk of education: The student-teacher relationship* (pp. 55-71). New York, NY: The Human Adventure Corporation.
- Peterson, J. B. (2018). *12 Rules for life: An antidote to chaos*. Toronto, Ontario: Random House Canada.
- Philippe, D., Hernandez-Melis, C. M., Fenning, P., Sears, K. N. B., & McDonough, E. M. (2017). A content analysis of Catholic schools written discipline policies. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 21(1), 6-35.
- Pinar, W. F. (2012). *What is curriculum theory?* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Pinar, W. F., Reynolds, W. M., Slattery, P. & Taubman, P. M. (2014). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Pojman, L. P. (1998). *Classics of philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Pramuk, C. (2002). What Thomas Merton taught me about forming young Catholics' imaginations. *America: The Jesuit Review*, (April 8, 2002). Retrieved from <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2002/04/08/what-thomas-merton-taught-me-about-forming-young-catholics-imaginations>
- Quinn, B. P. (2018). Purposeful explorers: Finding their purpose in a Catholic high school. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 21(2), 53-75.

- Redford, R. (Director). (1994). *Quiz Show* [Film]. California, US: Buena Vista Pictures.
- Reinking, D., & Bradley, B. A. (2008). *Formative and design experiments: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Rembert, R. B. (2017). Merton on sports and spirituality. *The Merton Seasonal*, 42(1), 18-25.
- Renewing our commitment to Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the third millennium*. (2005). Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Retrieved from: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catholic-education/upload/renewing-our-commitment-2005.pdf>
- Reza, S. A. M. (2008). Japan's national curriculum reforms: Focus on integrated curriculum approach. *Quarterly Journal of Educational Innovations*, 22(Winter 2008), 16-22.
- Rhodes, B. (2015). I was prime pickin'. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (pp. 133-138). Boston, MA: Sense.
- Rice, B. (2017). The joy of adolescent catechesis: An overview and invitation. *The Catechetical Review*, 3(3), 25-27.
- Rice, B., Hidalgo, M., Milewska, E., Miller, W., Coons, N., Ductram, P., Gould, C., Guider, V., Miller, C., & Pacione, M. (2017). *The joy of adolescent catechesis*. Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Educational Association.
- Rigby, K. (2003). Consequences of bullying in schools. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 48(9), 583-590.
- Robinson, L. (2011). Contemporary approaches to religious education. In L. Franchi & S. J. McKenney (Eds.), *A companion to Catholic education* (pp. 162-180). Leominster, UK: Gracewing.

- Rohr, R., & Martos, J. (2005). *From Wild Man to Wise Man: Reflections on Male Spirituality*. Cincinnati, OH: St Anthony's Messenger Press.
- Rosen, C. (2011). Virtual friendship and the new narcissism. In M. Bauerlein (Ed.), *The digital divide: Arguments for and against Facebook, Google, Texting, and the age of social networking*. New York, NY: Tarcher/Penguin.
- Royal, R. (1997). The several-storied Thomas Merton. *First Things*. Retrieved from <https://www.firstthings.com/article/1997/02/003-the-several-storied-thomas-merton>
- Russo, A., & Russo, J. (Directors). (2018). *Avengers: Infinity War*. United States: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Salem, P. A., & Walter, A. K. (2015). *Training for Educators: Using Mindfulness Practices and Skills with Young People*. Training Manual, 2nd ed. The Passionist Earth & Spirit Center. Louisville, KY.
- Sax, L. (2007). *Boys adrift: The five factors driving the growing epidemic of unmotivated boys and young underachieving men*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Sax, L. (2010). *Girls on the edge: The four factors driving the new crisis for girls*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Schlag, M. (2017). The formation of a Catholic concept of Christian humanism and of inclusive secularity. In J. Zimmermann (Ed.), *Re-envisioning Christian Humanism: Education and the restoration of humanity*. (pp. 198-220). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shaffer, S. M., & Gordon, L. P. (2005). *Why Boys Don't Talk and Why It Matters: A Parent's Guide to Connecting with Your Teen*. New York: McGraw-Hill.



- Shannon, W. H. (2005). *Thomas Merton: An introduction*. Rev. Ed. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- Shaw, J. M., Franklin, R. W., Kaasa, H., & Buzicky, C. W. (Ed.) (2009). *Readings in Christian humanism*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Sheehan, M. J. (2015). Addressing bad behavior with good science. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (pp. 261-280). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2004), 63-75.
- Sherman, L. (2015). Masculine of center. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (pp. 123-132). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Shimabukuro, G. (2007). *Educating for transformation: A curriculum development model for Catholic elementary & secondary schools*. Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Educational Association.
- Simmer-Brown, R. (2014). Communion through dialogue. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 64-65). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Sisto, R. (2014). Confluence of Merton and the sixties counter culture movement. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 15-18). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Skinner, R., & McFaull, S. (2012). Suicide among children and adolescents in Canada: trends and sex differences, 1980-2008. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 184(9), 1029-1034.

- Smith, C., & Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*: Oxford University Press.
- Stefanick, C., & Bolster, R. (2014). *Chosen: This is your Catholic faith*. West Chester, PA: Ascension Press.
- Stevens, C. (2003). *The art and heart of drum circles*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corp.
- Stoner, S. (2005). *NOOMA Noise 005*. U.S.A.: Zondervan.
- Stuart, A. (2014). Beat of the heart: A personal reflection on Thomas Merton. In G. Henry & J. Montaldo (Eds.), *We are already one: Thomas Merton's message of hope* (pp. 79-82). Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae.
- Stupacher, J., Maes, P. J., Witte, M., & Wood, G. (2017). Music strengthens prosocial effects of interpersonal synchronization - If you move in time with the beat. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 72(September 2017), 39-44.
- Taylor, C. (1991). *The ethics of authenticity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, T. (Ed.) (2002). *A Thomas Merton curriculum: Part of the Thomas Merton scholastics program*. Louisville, KY: The Thomas Merton Center Foundation.
- Tharp, R. G. (2012). *Delta Theory and Psychosocial Systems: The Practice of Influence and Change*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- The Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University. (2017). Louisville, KY. Retrieved from [merton.org/events](http://merton.org/events).
- The Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University. (2018a). Louisville, KY. Retrieved from <http://www.merton.org/research/Correspondence/y1.aspx?id=256>
- The Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University. (2018b). Louisville, KY. Retrieved from <http://merton.org/chrono.aspx>

- The Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University. (2018c). Louisville, KY. Retrieved from <http://merton.org/Research/recordings.aspx>
- Thomas, R. (2018). Youngsters encounter Thomas Merton. *The Record*. Retrieved from <https://therecordnewspaper.org/youngsters-encounter-thomas-merton/>
- Tollafield, K. A. (2015). The elephant in the school: Recognizing bullying in other forms. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (pp. 219-224). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Tomeo, T. (2007). *Noise: How our media-saturated culture dominates lives and dismantles families*. West Chester, PN: Ascension Press.
- Topping, R. N. S. (2015a). *The case for Catholic education: Why parents, teachers, and politicians should reclaim the principles of Catholic pedagogy*. Kettering, OH: Angelico Press.
- Topping, R. N. S. (Ed.) (2015b). *Renewing the mind: A reader in the philosophy of Catholic education*. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Tosun, L. P. (2012). Motives for Facebook use and expressing “true self” on the Internet. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(4), 1510-1517.
- Turley, J. (2015). Dyke! Dyke! Dyke! In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in schools* (pp. 97-103). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- United States Department of Education. (2011). Analysis of State Bullying Laws and Policies. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/bullying/state-bullying-laws/state-bullying-laws.pdf>
- Uhrmacher, P. B., Moroye, C. M., & Flinders, D. J. (2017). *Using educational criticism and connoisseurship for qualitative research*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Vandivert, W. (1957). Quiz champ Van Doren. *Time*, *LXIX*(6). Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/0,9263,7601570211,00.html>
- van den Akker, J., Gravemeijer, K., McKenney, S., & Nieveen N. (Ed.) (2006). *Educational design research*. London: Routledge.
- Van Doren, C. (2008). All the answers: the quiz-show scandals-and the aftermath. *The New Yorker*, (July 28, 2008). Retrieved from <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/07/28/all-the-answers>
- Van Doren, M. (1987). *The selected letters of Mark Van Doren* (G. Hendrick Ed.). Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press.
- Waldron, R. (2012). *Thomas Merton: The exquisite risk of love: The Chronicle of a Monastic romance*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.
- Walk off the Earth. (2017a, February 16). Shape of You – Walk off the Earth (Ed Sheeran cover) [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YV5KAbV34NU>
- Walk off the Earth. (2017b, October 11). Hey Ya! – Walk off the Earth (Outkast cover) [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7R8XRKqHAI>
- Watson, S. M. (2013). My brother's keeper: Violence and school liability. *Journal of Catholic Education*, *4*(4), 454-463.
- Weakland, R. G. (2009). *A pilgrim in a pilgrim church: Memoirs of a Catholic Archbishop*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Weigel, G. (2002). *Courage to be Catholic: Crisis, reform, and the future of the Church*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Wilkes, P., & Glynn, A. L. (Directors). (1984). *Merton: A film biography* [DVD]: First Run Features.

- Williams, R. (2015). Words, war and silence: Thomas Merton for the twenty-first century. *The Merton Annual*, 28, 40-53.
- Wirth, E. (2015). You are worth it. In C. Boske & A. Osanloo (Eds.), *Students, teachers, and leaders addressing bullying in school* (pp. 41-43). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Wiseman, R. (2009). *Queen bees & wannabes: Helping your daughter survive cliques, gossip, boyfriends, and the new realities of girl world*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Wolfe, P. (2010). *Brain matters: Translating research into classroom practice* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Zemeckis, R. (Director). (1985). *Back to the Future*. United States: Universal Pictures.
- Zimmermann, J. (2017a). The cultural context for re-envisioning Christian humanism. In J. Zimmermann (Ed.), *Re-envisioning Christian Humanism: Education and the restoration of humanity*. (pp. 137-160). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zimmermann, J. (2017b). Introduction. In J. Zimmermann (Ed.), *Re-envisioning Christian Humanism: Education and the restoration of humanity* (pp. 1-15). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zinger, L. (2008). Educating for tolerance and compassion: Is there a place for meditation in a college classroom? *College Teaching Methods & Styles Journal*, 4(4), 25-28.
- Zuercher, S. (2014). *The ground of love and truth: Reflections on Thomas Merton's relationship with the woman known as 'M.'* Chicago, IL: In Extenso.
- Zwart, H. (Director). (2010). *The Karate Kid*. United States: Sony Pictures.